MANORAMA

No. 68

TELL ME WHY

HUNTERS OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

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100 + FACTS ABOUT THE HUNTING SKILLS OF ANIMALS

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TELL ME WHY

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The World of Predators

In the cycle of life, predators always occupy an important position. They are killers. But they kill, only to 'kill' their hunger. In fact, the story of the animal kingdom is full of predators trying to catch prey, and the prey trying to outwit predators. It is the balance between the two that takes the drama of life forward. In the wild, there is no place for the weak, whether it's the predator or the prey, and only the fittest survives.

In the long-played-out drama of evolution, when a predator gains the advantage, the prey develops skills to counter it. The hunters keep populations healthy by weeding out the old and the sick. Of course, there are also creatures that steal the prey caught by others, like hyenas.

This issue of Tell Me Why takes you to the fearsome world of predators, in their magnificent variety. The animals presented here mostly live on land, some of them hunting in the water. We hope to bring you the hunters of the sky and water in future issues.

FROM THE HOUSE OF MAGIC POT, MANORAMA YEAR BOOK, VANITHA, THE WEEK AND THE MALAYALA MANORAMA DAILY

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HUNTERS OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

Siberian Tiger

Siberian tigers are the world's largest cats. They live primarily in Eastern Russia's birch forests, though some exist in China and North Korea. Their fur is usually pale

Why are tigers called the most ferocious of predators?

Do you know what predators are? When talking about animals, predators are animals that live by hunting, killing, and eating other animals. Tigers are predators, and are the biggest of all cats. There are six different kinds of tigers, and they are considered to be the most ferocious hunters of the animal world.

The different types of tigers live in a variety of habitats. Some live in forests in Southern

A Tiger

orange-brown, with black stripes. They are paler than most other tigers. The fur on the belly and chest is white, with black stripes. They have a white ruff around the neck. There are only about 400 of these magnificent tigers left in the wild, and they are an endangered species.

Asia, some in the woodlands of Siberia. Others are found in mangrove swamps, and in tall grass jungles. Some are found in the mountains where it is snowy. Most tigers live and hunt alone, and mark their territory by spraying the ground and plants with urine, and by leav-

Bengal Tiger

The Bengal Tiger is found in the rainforests and grasslands of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, India, and Nepal. Bengal tigers are extremely large, and the males are up to 3 metres in length. The Bengal tiger's fur is orange-brown, with black stripes. It hunts deer, pigs, antelopes, cattle, buffaloes and even baby elephants.

South China Tiger

Conservation of Tigers

Tigers help control the population of plant eating animals like deer, wild buffaloes and antelopes, as well as animals like boars that eat both plants and animals. Today, tigers are becoming fewer and fewer, due to poaching and lack of habitat. As a result, an im-

ing scratch marks on trees. They are also good swimmers. A tiger's stripes help it to get close to prey when it is hunting, by allowing it to blend into the grasses, and edges of forests where it lives. Each tiger's pattern is different, like human fingerprints.

Tigers hunt mainly between sunset and dawn. They stalk their prey, and get as close as possible. They then chase the animal from behind, pouncing on it, and biting the neck or throat. When the prey is dead, the tiger drags it to a safe place,

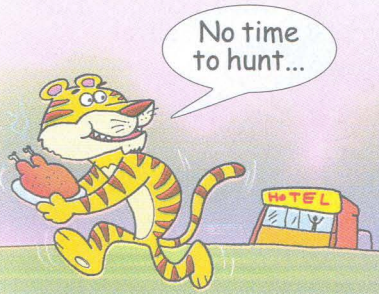
Bengal Tiger

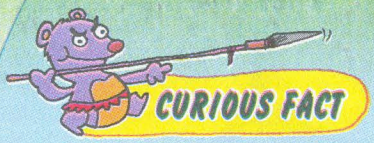
portant link in the food chain is fast vanishing. It is very important to save the tiger, in order to keep the balance of Nature, which in turn, will save our forests, and our planet!

White Tiger

and eats it. If the prey is a large animal, the tiger can feed on it for a few days.

Not every hunt is successful, so tigers don't eat every day. They hunt and eat many different kinds of animal such as deer, wild pigs, birds, monkeys, leopards, bears, and wild cattle. Did you know that tigers eat up to 18 kgs of meat at one time?





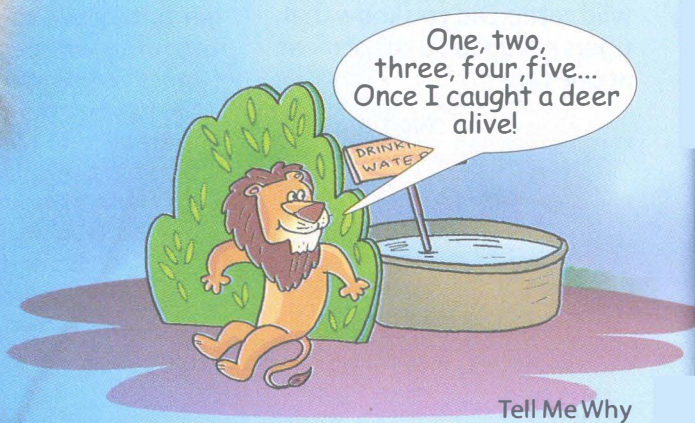
White Tiger

White tigers are not albinos. They are Bengal tigers that possess a special gene responsible for their characteristic white colour. If a male and female tiger both have this gene, their offspring will be white. White tigers are bigger in size than the orange ones. Their fur is pale in colour, and lined with chocolate coloured stripes. Their eyes are blue. It is hard to find white tigers in the wild. Most of today's white tigers are found in captivity.

Why is a lion's hunting technique unique?

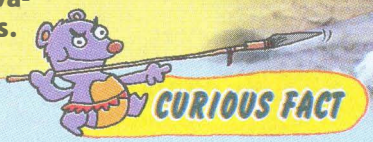
The lion is a member of the cat family. Although it is called the 'the king of the jungle', it is found mostly in the open plains of East Africa, with a few found in India.

Lions are social animals. By hunting together,they get more food for everyone. Lions tend to generally hunt by night, or in the early mornings. They are not very fast animals, but in contrast, the animals they hunt are some of the fastest on the planet. Consequently, lions have developed two main hunting methods. In the first, the lion stalks its prey from cover to cover, with a final burst of speed at the end. If spotted, the lion will sit up and stare nonchalantly into the distance! The second method is to find a bush close to something your prey needs - usually water - climb in, and wait. Sometimes, one or more lions will wait in ambush at a waterhole, and jump on unsus-



Asiatic Lion

The Asiatic lion is one of the seven sub-species of lions on this planet. The Gir forest in India is the only place where this magnificent animal is found today. Asiatic lions feed on wild pigs, cattle, antelope and deer in the wild. The present population of Asiatic lions is 359, but this number is increasing every year because of conservation efforts.



pecting animals coming for a drink. Group hunting methods are ruthless and scientific. The younger members of a pride will often 'drive' a herd of prey animals towards the more experienced hunters who are waiting in ambush. Making a kill is generally done in two stages- first, the lion brings the animal down, and then, it actually kills its prey.An adult lion will typically eat 18 Kgs of meat at a time. After eating a large meal, lions will sleep for as long as 24 hours! Generally speaking, it is the lionesses that do most of the hunting.

Role Play

Lionesses develop and sharpen their fighting skills by role playing. However, they are careful to retract their claws, and they do not expose their teeth while playing. This type of play also helps them to determine their status within the pride.

Leopard on Tree Tops

Leopards spend a lot of their time on trees. Cubs learn to climb trees when they are young, and their mothers leave them up in the branches for their own safety. Leopards regularly sleep on tree tops too. However, they find climbing down trees more difficult than climbing up, because of their backward pointing claws.

Leopard

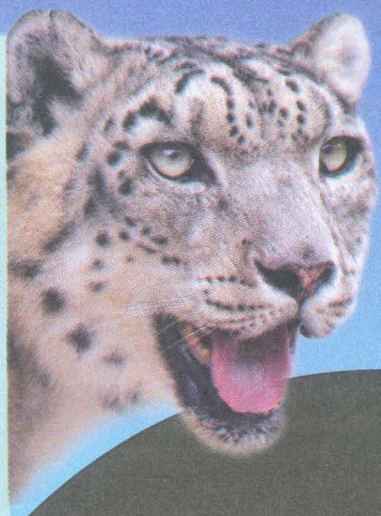
Why is the leopard a hugely skilled hunter?

Leopards are found in a variety of habitats ranging from tropical forests to mountains. They are most widely distributed in Southern Africa and Southeast Asia. Weighing in at an average 60 kgs, leopards are half the size of lions and tigers. But what leopards lack in size, they make up for in strength. With their specialized senses and anatomy tailored for hunting, leopards can occasionally slay animals up to three times their size.

When a leopard sights a potential target, it stalks forward with head low and legs bent, making clever use of cover. Once it is within a range of about 10 metres, this cat dashes forward and uses the sharp, hooked claws of each forepaw to kill its prey.

Snow Leopard

Snow leopards live in the mountains of Central Asia. They are greyish in colour, and are insulated by thick hair. Their wide, fur-covered feet act as natural snowshoes. They use their long tails for balance, and as blankets to cover sensitive body parts against the severe mountain chill. They are hunted for their beautiful, warm fur, and for their organs, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine.



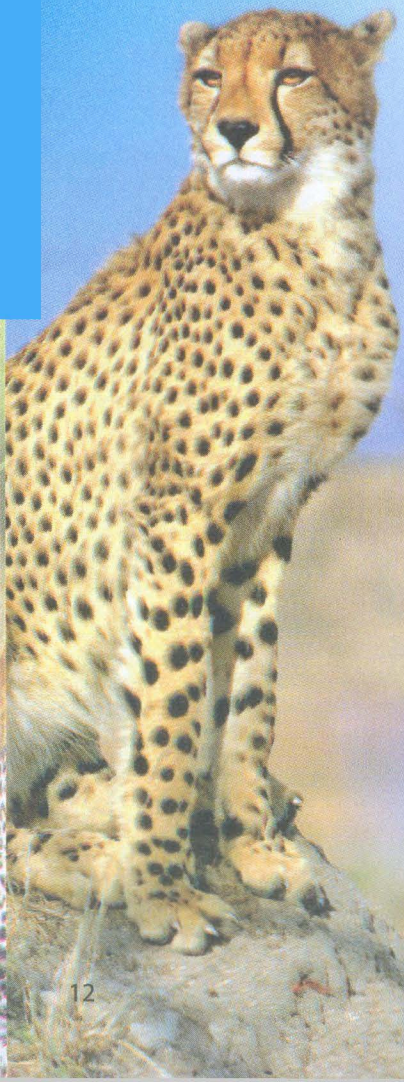
The killing bite is directed at the nape of the neck or at the throat. Small prey such as mice, rats and small birds are simply swatted to death with a single swipe of a paw. The prey is often carried up into a tree, and wedged among the branches, so that the leopard can eat in peace. Leopards are so strong that they can carry carcasses weighing more than 50 kgs up vertical tree trunks!

Black Panther

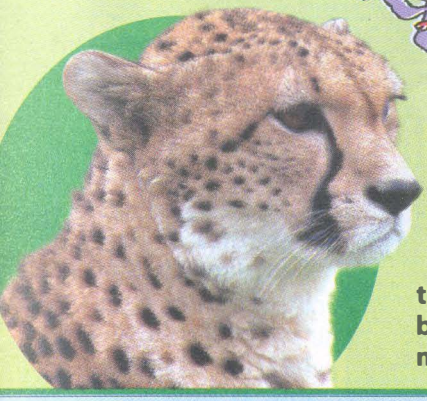
The black panther is actually a black leopard, and these cats are born in the same litter as normally marked cats and also carry the rosette markings. The habits of these cats are exactly like those of the normal coloured specimens. They inhabit the most densely forested areas of China, Assam, Nepal, and Myanmar.

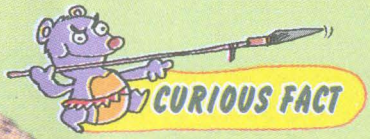
Why is the cheetah a successful hunter?

Cheetah



Most wild cheetahs are found in Eastern and South Western Africa. The cheetah is the world's fastest land mammal. It can go from 0 to 100 kilometres an hour in only three seconds, and can make quick and sudden turns in pursuit of prey. The cheetah hunts during the day. It uses its exceptionally keen eyesight to scan its grassland environment for signs of prey, gets as close to the prey as possible, then in a burst of speed, it tries to outrun its quarry and attempts to knock it down. If successful, the cheetah will often drag its kill to a shady hiding place to protect it from other animals that sometimes steal a kill before the cheetah can eat. Because the cheetah runs so fast, it overheats in about 20 seconds. If the prey can stay ahead





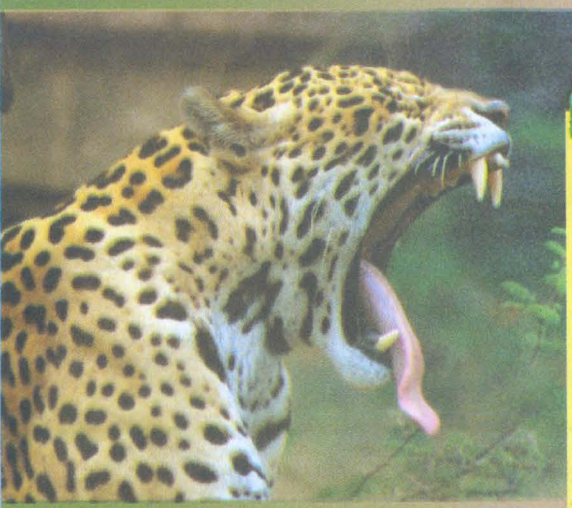
Cheetah Conservation

The cheetah is listed as vulnerable on the International union of Conservation of Nature's(IUCN) Red List of Threatened Animals. In Namibia, cheetahs are caught and fitted with radio collars and then released. This makes it possible to track their movements and monitor conservation efforts.

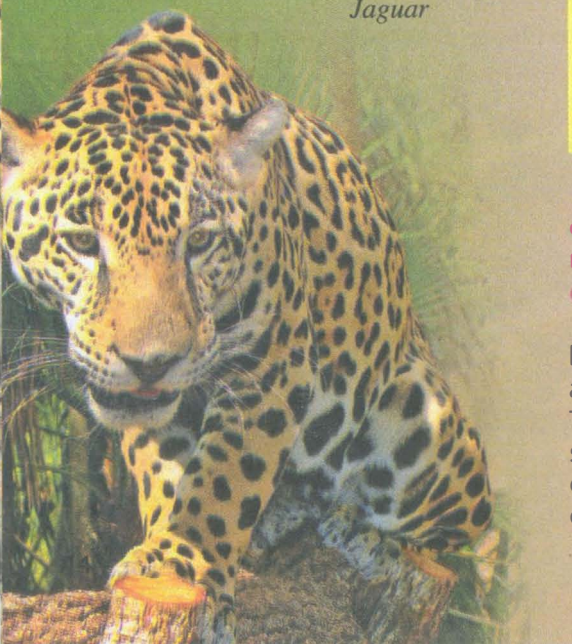
for longer than this, it stands a good chance of escaping.

Cheetah mothers spend a long time teaching their young how to hunt. Small live antelopes are brought back to the cubs so they can learn to chase and catch them. Cheetahs eat primarily hoofed mammals weighing less than 40 kgs, including gazelles and young wildebeest. They will also eat smaller game such as hares, warthogs, and birds.

A Cheetah with a Kill



Jaguar



STARFACT

Jaguar in Danger

The jaguar's beautiful coat has placed its life in danger. It is ruthlessly hunted by fur trappers, and is now very rarely seen. Jaguars are also on the endangered list, as their feeding grounds are becoming less and less available to them and they seem to be a trophy for hunters.

Why are jaguars called skilled fishermen as well as hunters?

Jaguars resemble leopards, but are larger and more heavily built. They are very good swimmers and climbers, but normally hunt on the ground. It is be-

lieved that jaguars catch fish by twitching their tails over the surface of the water. This movement attracts the fish, which are then swiped out of the water with the animals' large paws.

Jaguars are capable of killing just about any type of prey they encounter. They can kill animals ranging in size from an armadillo that weighs 1 kg, to a cow that weighs more than 450 kgs! Jaguars hunt by walking slowly along trails, watching ,and listening for prey. They also wait in ambush beside trails, and will leap into the water in pursuit of prey. They hunt when their prey is most active. In areas where they feed on nocturnal prey, they hunt at night. Jaguars preying on cattle often hunt during the daytime, and they usually kill caiman and turtles while these reptiles bask beside the water during the day.

Jaguar Battle

Jaguars often fight over territory. These battles are usually fierce, but one of the animals will retreat before real harm is done, while the victor patrols the area to make sure his rival has left.

Jaguar

The Cougar and Puma

The mountain lion is called the cougar in some parts of the United States. In other parts, it is known as the puma. These cats are found deep in deciduous

Why is the mountain lion one of the top predators of the animal world?

The mountain lion is a hunter that is the largest native cat in North America. It preys on the same animals as the jaguar. The mountain lion is a good climber and a powerful predator, weighing up to around 90 kgs.

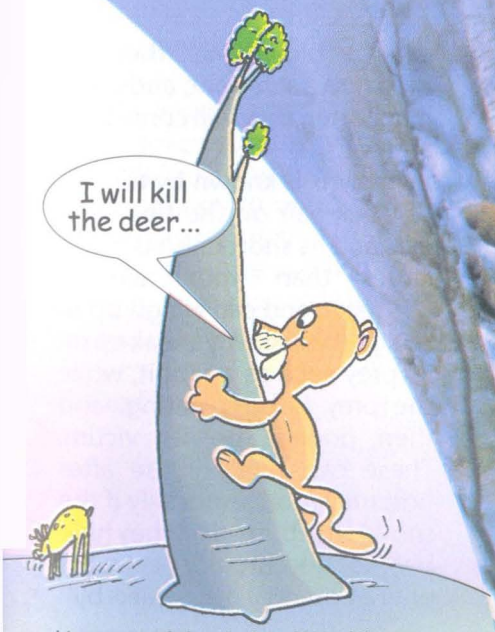
Mountain lions like to prey on deer, though they also eat smaller animals such as porcupines and raccoons. They usually hunt at night, or during dawn and dusk. They stealthily stalk their prey until an opportunity arrives to pounce, and kill with a powerful bite. They will hide large carcasses, and feed on them for several days. Did you know that this predator can run 55 kmph, and leap over 9 metres?

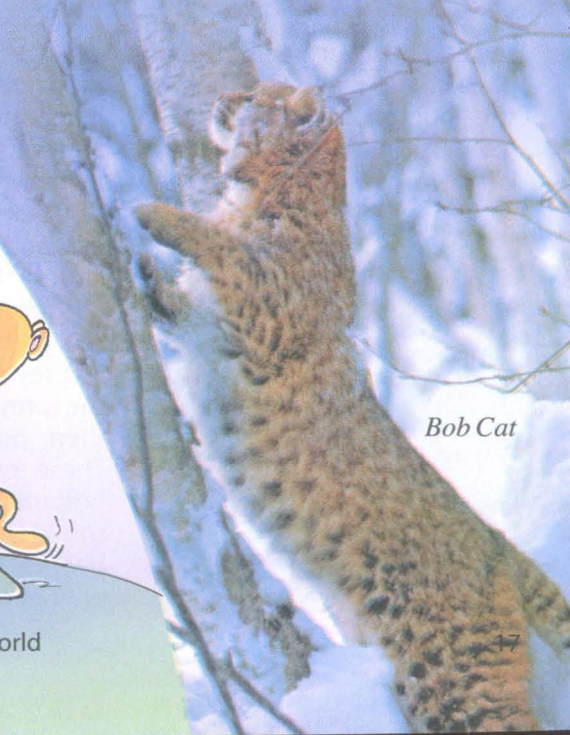
Mountain Lion

forests, rain forests, grasslands, and the deserts of North America and South America. They are very athletic, and are excellent jumpers, climbers, and swimmers. Interestingly, they can purr but cannot roar!

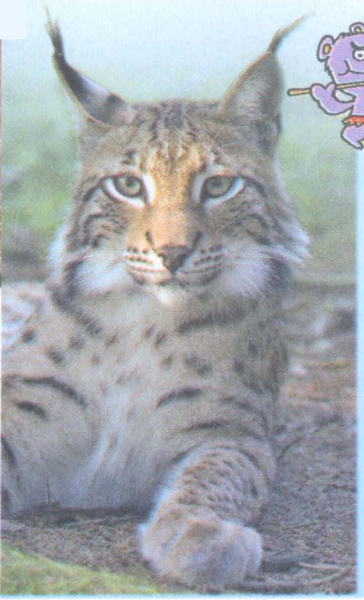
What do we know about how the lynx and the bobcat hunt?

The lynx and the bob cat are both found in North America. They belong to similar species, and are among the smaller wild cats. Bobcats are bigger than house cats, and like to live in woods or grassy areas. They are nocturnal hunters. They eat rabbits, rats, squirrels, ground birds, turkeys, and even small or sick deer. Sometimes, they will kill and eat chickens or lambs on a farm. Bobcats can





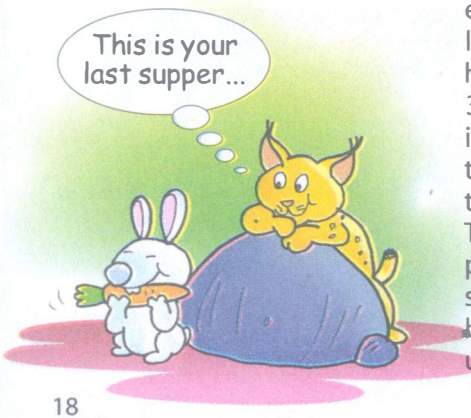
Bob Cat



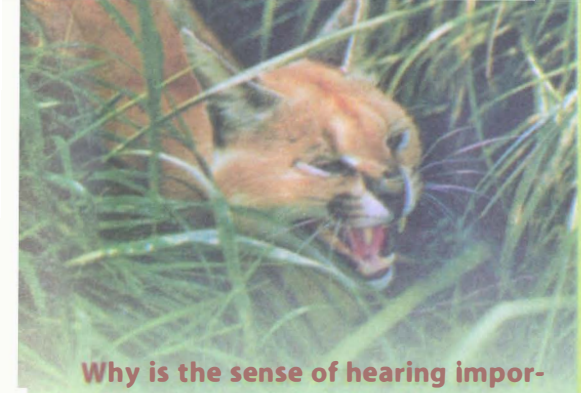
Lynx Conservation

The world is a dangerous place for the lynx right now. Their forest homes are being cut down for agricultural uses. Hunting is still a problem for these beautiful animals, too. The soft, luxurious coat that keeps the lynx warm and comfortable in the colder months is also popular in the fur industry, especially the lighter-coloured belly fur. It is estimated that about 90,000 bobcat and lynx pelts are sold each year to the world's fur markets, which is all the more reason to save these endangered cats.

see and hear very well. The soft pads on their feet help them to sneak up on an animal quietly. Bobcats can only eat about 1.5 kgs of meat at a time, so if they catch a big animal, they will drag it to a safe spot, and cover it up. Later, they will come back and eat.



The lynx is known by the tuft of black hair on the tips of its ears and its short tail. It is much larger than your average housecat, and can weigh up to 38 kgs. It will slowly sneak up on its prey such as a rabbit, while the prey is busy eating, and then pounce on its victim. These cats rarely chase after potential food, especially if the snow is deep. Instead, they hide behind tree stumps or rocks until a potential meal walks by!



Why is the sense of hearing important to servals and caracals?

Servals and caracals are found in the grassy plains of Africa. Servals have better hearing than the other small cats – and this is very useful for them while hunting. Servals locate prey in the tall grass or reeds primarily by hearing. To kill their prey, servals use a high leap to strike their victim, preventing its escape.

Sometimes called 'African lynx' or 'desert lynx', caracals are tufted-eared cats. Caracals , hunt rodents, birds, and small deer. The cat's ears are each controlled by about 20 muscles to help these hunters better determine where prey is hiding. They are excellent acrobats, and have been known to leap up into the air to successfully catch and kill birds.

Cat Pounce

Servals can leap up to 4 metres in length and jump as high as one metre. When it locates its prey, it will pounce on it and strike the victim down with its fore paws. The serval's pounce is a distinctive and precise vertical 'hop', which is sometimes adapted to capture birds.

Why is the margay different from other wildcats?

The margay is a solitary wildcat with some very unique characteristics. It is completely dependent on the cover of the treetop canopy throughout its Central and South American range. In some areas, margays hunt, sleep, and even have their young in trees. The margay has unique physical features that make it an excellent hunter, and help it to survive in its forested habitat. A margay's feet are exceptionally broad, with mobile toes and flexible ankles than can rotate up to 180°.

Margays are quite capable of climbing down a tree head first. When moving about the tree canopy, should they fall, they can stop the fall by grasping branches with their hind feet, and setting themselves upright. They are exceptionally agile climbers, and excellent jumpers. Captive cats have been seen jumping nearly six metres straight into the air, and nine metres horizontally. Margays are among the most beautiful and mysterious of the spotted cats.

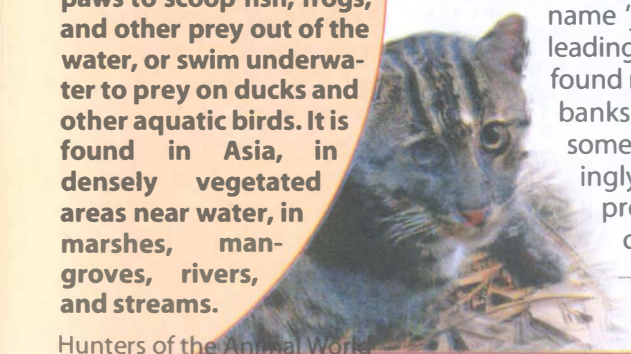
Margay

Jungle Cat

What is interesting about the jungle cat?

The jungle cat is a hunter that is found across a wide geographic area, ranging from Egypt and the Middle East, as well as parts of Southern Asia through to Western China. It can be distinguished from other wild cat species by its long legs and uniform coat colour, which ranges from sandy yellow to reddish brown. The jungle cat is generally more active during daylight hours.

Its prey ranges from rodents, small mammals, birds, reptiles and insects, and occasionally, wild pig and chital deer. The jungle cat can climb well, and has also been observed diving into water to catch fish. In fact, the name 'jungle cat' is misleading, as jungle cats are found mainly along river banks, reed beds, and in some forests. Interestingly, the jungle cat is probably the only cat that barks!



Fishing Cat

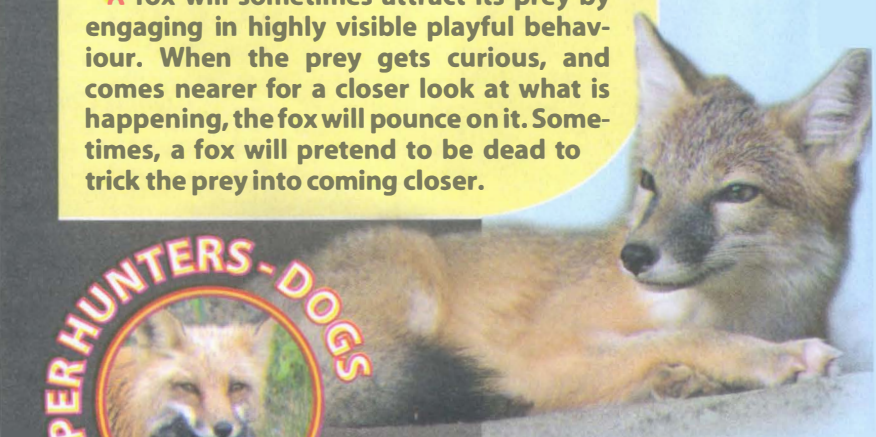
STARFACT

FishingCat

The fishing cat attracts fish by lightly tapping the water's surface with its paw, mimicking insect movements. Then, it dives into the water to catch the fish. It can also use its partially webbed paws to scoop fish, frogs, and other prey out of the water, or swim underwater to prey on ducks and other aquatic birds. It is found in Asia, in densely vegetated areas near water, in marshes, mangroves, rivers, and streams.

Playing to Attract Prey

A fox will sometimes attract its prey by engaging in highly visible playful behaviour. When the prey gets curious, and comes nearer for a closer look at what is happening, the fox will pounce on it. Sometimes, a fox will pretend to be dead to trick the prey into coming closer.



Swift Fox

Fennec Fox

The smallest of the foxes is the fennec fox. It is identified by its relatively huge ears. It shelters in burrows that it digs in the sand, and is generally active at night, when it preys on small rodents, birds, insects and lizards. It is between 35 and 43 centimetres-long, and weighs around 1.5 kgs.

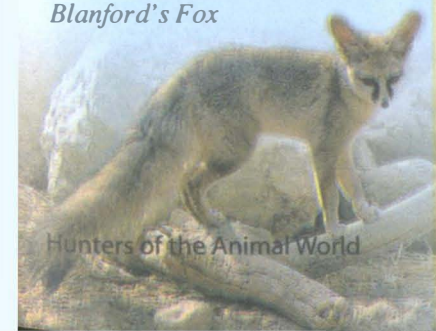
Fennec Fox

Why do we say that foxes have a special hunting technique?

A fox's hunting technique varies according to the strength and weakness of its prey. Insects form a major portion of a fox's diet, but the fox has a very casual approach when hunting them. Small, burrowing rodents also form an important part of fox's diet. The fox has a special technique for these. It will move very quietly so as not to alert its quarry, and listen intently for any scurrying sounds that indicate the presence of its prey.

The fox also relies on its sense to smell to pinpoint its target. Once a target is located, the fox will launch itself through the air like a rocket, grab, and finish off the prey. Fi
ger prey like a rabbit or hare, the fox will stalk it, crouching low on the ground, with its eyes locked on the target. A short chase generally follows, and if the fox is successful, it disables its prey by biting its legs before killing it. Foxes hunt birds, but in such cases, they leap horizontally at the prey and attempt to bite it. However, more often than not, the bird manages to escape!

Blanford's Fox



Crab-Eating Foxes

Crab-Eating Foxes can be found in the open woodlands and grasslands of South America. They are omnivores, and they mainly feed on crabs, fish, reptiles, birds, rodents, insects, eggs and fruit.

Blanford's Fox

Blanford's Foxes are small foxes found in the semi-arid regions, steppes, and mountains in West and South Asia. They are solitary hunters that come out at night, preying on insects and small creatures. They also eat fruit. Blanford's foxes are less suspicious than other foxes, and are, therefore, easy to trap and kill. This has meant that their numbers have been dramatically reduced.

Culpeo Fox

Culpeo foxes are the largest species of fox in South America. Culpeo foxes can be found in the deciduous forests and grasslands on the western side of the Andes mountain range in South America. They hunt rabbits, hares, lizards, birds and insects. They also feed on fruit and carrion.

Why is the Arctic fox special?

The Arctic fox is special for many reasons. Its lush coat is pure white in winter for camouflage against the snow and ice. When the seasons change, the fox's coat changes colour as well, adopting a brown or gray appearance that provides cover among the summer tundra's rocks and plants.

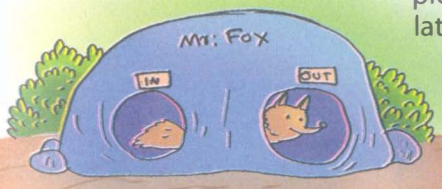
Kit foxes hunt rodents, birds, and even fish. They feed primarily on small mammals, including lemmings and tundra voles. Those who have their dens near rocky

Arctic Fox

Red Fox

Red foxes live around the world in many diverse habitats including forests, grasslands, mountains, and deserts. The great alertness of the red fox and its keen sense of smell, hearing, and sight enable it to live close to humans without being easily noticed. The red fox is primarily a predator.

cliffs along the seacoast often depend heavily on nesting seabirds such as auklets, and puffins. In winter, Arctic foxes follow polar bears to feed on their leftovers. When food is plentiful, they will bury it for later.



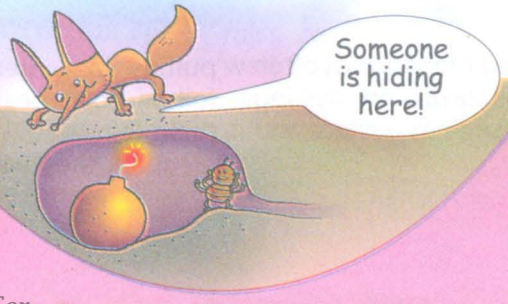
Grey Fox

The grey fox is a peppery grey on top, reddish-brown on its sides, chest, and the back of its head. The grey fox can be found from Southern Canada to Northern Columbia and Venezuela. The grey fox is a solitary hunter, and eats a wide-variety of foods. A large part of its diet is made up of small mammals like mice and voles.

Why are its ears important to the bat eared fox?

The bat-eared fox's name comes from its enormous ears, which are large in proportion to its head like those of many bats. These foxes use their ears to detect tiny sounds like the movements of termites underground. They hunt mainly at night and dash about their feeding ground with their ears to the ground. Bat-eared foxes can hear larvae chewing their way out of an underground dung beetle ball. They can also detect the sound of harvesting termites chewing on short grasses.

The diet of bat eared foxes consists primarily of insects and other arthropods, especially the harvester termite and dung beetles. They occasionally feed on small rodents, lizards, the eggs and chicks of birds, and plant matter.



Bat-eared Fox

Raccoon Dogs

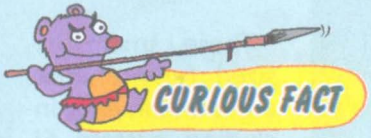
Why is the raccoon dog an unusual member of its family?

Raccoon dogs are a species of canine named for their striking resemblance to raccoons. The animal's face sports a black mask, small rounded ears, and a pointed muzzle, resembling a raccoon, hence its name. However, it is not related to the raccoon at all.

These small fox-sized furry animals are found in Asia, including eastern Siberia and Japan. Raccoon dogs are unusual in that as they are the only ones in their family that will spend the winter asleep, entering hibernation in November, and becoming active again in March. Raccoon dogs hunt frogs, lizards, invertebrates, insects, birds and eggs. They are omnivorous, and eat plants too.

Bush Dog

The bush dog is about the size of a terrier, with short legs and a short tail. Its feet are webbed, an adaptation that comes in handy when the animal takes to the water in search of prey. Bush dogs eat large rodents such as capybaras and agoutis. They are efficient swimmers, and may chase their prey into water. They make their den in a burrow or hollow tree trunk.



Small Eared Dog

Small-eared dogs have rounded ears, which are relatively shorter than any other canine's. They are found in Brazil and Peru, and inhabit tropical forests from sea level to about 1,000m. They are elusive animals and they prefer a solitary lifestyle. Small-Eared dogs mainly feed on fish, small mammals, insects, crabs, fruit, amphibians, reptiles and birds.

What are dingoes?

The dingo is Australia's only native dog, and is thought to have descended from wild Asian dogs. Dingoes arrived in Australia about 4000-6000 years ago, and were probably introduced through trading between Aboriginal people and Indonesians fishing in local waters.

Dingo

Dingoes are Australia's largest mammalian meat-eater or carnivore. They hunt many other animals such as the kangaroo. Though dingoes are predominantly carnivorous, they will eat a wide variety of foods, including plants and insects. They hunt mainly at night.

Australia is home to so many of these animals that they are generally considered pests. A famous 'dingo fence' has been erected to protect grazing lands for the continent's herds of sheep from dingoes.

Why is the dhole's hunting strategy different?

The Dhole, Asia's wild dog, is different from other wild dogs in many ways. Among its unusual features is a strange whistle call, which it uses to re-assemble the pack when animals become separated in dense forest. The dhole is one of the few dogs that regularly hunt in packs. This requires intelligence, co-ordination, and sometimes ruthlessness. In India, one of the dhole's favourite prey is the medium-sized axis deer. On occasions, however, it will tackle larger prey, and even highly aggressive prey like the wild boar.

Dholes hunt during the day. The animals first gather together in a clearing, and seem to communicate with their strange calls. The pack hunts with a definite strategy. Dhole packs have one 'lead dog' in charge. The dholes communication helps them take down prey many times their own body weight. Then they swallow meat in large chunks and actually carry it back to pack members this way! They will hunt together, share their prey, then separate again into the original smaller groups.

Dhole

What prey do African dogs hunt?

The African wild dog is found in East Africa. It has a colourful, patchy coat, large bat-like ears and a bushy tail with a white tip that may serve as a flag to keep the pack in contact while hunting. The African wild dog preys on gazelles and other antelopes, wart hogs, wildebeests, calves, rats, and birds. They have a peculiar, playful ceremony that initiates each hunt. They circulate among themselves, vocalizing and touching until they get excited. When prey is targeted, some of the dogs run close to the animal, while others follow behind, taking over when the leaders tire. They can run long distances at speeds up to 55 kilometres per hour. African wild dogs sometimes tear the flesh off their victim even while it is alive. This has given them a reputation for cruelty. The most remarkable part of their hunting is their complete lack of aggressiveness towards each other. They play an important role in the process of natural selection, in which only the fittest survive.

They are Different!

No two wild dogs have the same markings. Each individual has markings different from the others, making it unique in appearance. Like most predators, they play an important role in eliminating sick and weak animals, and help to maintain to the balance of nature.

Maned Wolf

The maned wolf stands nearly one metre tall at the shoulder and weighs about 23 kgs. This wolf lives in Central and Southeastern Brazil, Paraguay, Eastern Bolivia, and Northern Argentina. It inhabits open forest, savannah, and marshland. They eat small mammals, insects, reptiles, birds, bird eggs, fruits, and plants. They can rotate their large ears to listen for prey animals in the grass. They tap the ground with their front foot to flush out the prey, and pounce to catch it.

What do wolves prey on?

Wolves kill, and eat other animals for food. Depending on where they live, wolves live mainly on the meat from such animals as deer, moose, elk, or bison. They also eat beavers, rabbits and even mice. Because wolves usually hunt for large animals, they work together to catch their prey. They need an average of 1 to 2.5 kgs of meat each day. However, hunting is not always successful, so their bodies are designed to either eat a lot, or to go for days without eating

Grey Wolf

Why wolves are considered good hunters?

Wolves usually hunt in packs but in the spring and summer, when there is plenty of prey available they hunt alone. The leader of the pack is usually the biggest and strongest. He is like a king. The other wolves in the pack usually do what the lead wolf tells them to do. During a hunt, howling may be used to signal the location of each wolf to other members.

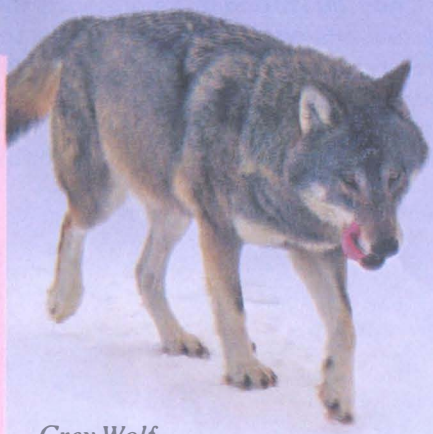
Wolves are primarily nocturnal animals. They generally commence hunting at dusk. When hunting in winter, the wolf will conserve energy whenever possible, by following the same trail as the prey animal, staying upwind, and staying out of sight of the prey as long as possible. Wolves detect prey by tracking, and chance encounters. After prey is detected, wolves may split up to search through brush, travel on ridge tops searching for the prey below, or test herds looking for signs of weakness. When it is time to strike, the wolves will start wagging their tails with excitement. They will generally attack the weakest member of a herd. The wolves in a pack are loyal to each other in every way, although wolves may fight with other packs if they cross territories.

anything. In fact, they can eat as much as 10 kgs of meat at a time, and then may not eat again for many days. Did you know that wolves eat fish too? In fact, a wolf was once observed catching five fishes in fifteen minutes! Wolves will sometimes eat grass as a remedy, if they have eaten something that doesn't agree with them.

Red Wolves

The red wolf is one of two species of wolves in North America, and it is an endangered animal. They are known for the characteristic reddish color of their fur most apparent behind the ears and along the neck and legs. Red wolves are social animals that live in packs. They prey on a variety of wild mammals such as raccoon, rabbit, white-tailed deer, and other rodents. They are most active at dusk and dawn. Red wolves are elusive and generally avoid humans and human activity.

Red Wolf



Grey Wolf

Why is the grey wolf special?

The grey wolf is special for many reasons. To begin with, it is the largest member of the canine family, and the ancestor of the domestic dog. Wolves live, travel, and hunt in packs of 4-7 animals that include the mother and father wolves, called the alphas, their pups, and several other subordinate or young animals. Wolves develop close relationships and strong social bonds. They often demonstrate deep affection for their family, and may even sacrifice themselves to protect the family unit, and this makes them truly special. Wolves also have a complex communica-

Side Striped Jackal

The side striped jackal inhabits the deciduous woodlands of many Savannah regions throughout Africa. Their name originates from the light marks running alongside the sides of their bodies. This fox prefers wooded habitats along with bush, grassland, and marshes all below 822 metres. The side-striped jackal will eat wild fruits, small mammals such as mice, rats, and hares, and insects like as crickets, beetles, termites, and grasshoppers. Did you know that this jackal does not howl like other jackals do, though it does make many other sounds?

Side Striped Jackal

tion system that ranges from barks and whines to growls and howls.

Designed to hunt for meat, the grey wolves spends most of their time roaming tirelessly in search of large prey. They eat ungulates, or large hoofed mammals, like elk, deer, moose and caribou. Wolves are also known to eat beavers, rabbits and other small prey. Wolves are scavengers, and often eat animals that have died due to other causes like starvation and disease. Interestingly, grey wolves are not always grey; they can be white, black or virtually any shade of tan or grey!

What do we know about the golden jackal and black backed jackal?

Golden jackals are also known as common jackals. They are generally regarded as small scavengers, but apart from scavenging, they do hunt and kill for their own food. Golden jackals are primarily nocturnal. They prey on smaller mammals such as hares, rodents, and small antelope as well as the young of larger antelopes. Golden jackals will also eat snakes, beetles, crickets, spiders, fruits, and berries. A pair of male and female jackals will often hunt together which significantly increases the chance of the hunt being successful. Golden jackals are mainly found in open plains areas, but they are also found in wooded areas.

Black Backed Jackal

Golden Jackal

The black backed jackal takes its name from the prominent 'saddle' on its back, which is black, with some white as well. Black backed jackals are active during the day. Male and female jackals hunt, scent mark, and defend their territory together. Jackals are good runners, and are able to trot at 12-15 kilometres per hour for long periods when searching for food. When hunting in long grass, the jackal's good hearing allows it to locate prey before pouncing. Black Backed jackals prey on smaller mammals such as hares, rodents and small antelope as well as the young of larger antelopes. On the skeleton coast, Black backed jackals prey mainly on seals. Black backed jackals will kill and eat sheep and goats - which is why farmers hate them!

Ethiopian Jackal

The Ethiopian jackal is also known as the Ethiopian wolf. It is found in the Afro-alpine regions of Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is thought that the Ethiopian wolf may be a descendant of the grey wolf. The Ethiopian Jackal is one of the rarest, and most endangered of all canids. Only about twelve populations, totaling about 450 adults, remain.

Ethiopian Jackal

African Wild Dog

What do we know about wild dogs?

Of the large carnivores, wild dogs are the most efficient hunters – targeted prey rarely escapes. Nearly 80 percent of all wild dog hunts ends in a kill!

Wild dogs live mostly in arid zones and in the savanna. They also are found in woodland and montane habitats where their prey lives. They usually travel over long distances in search of food, except when they have a litter of pups to care for.

The African wild dog, also called the hunting dog, is a vanishing species in East Africa. The wild dog is a highly intelligent and social animal.

One Wolf Many Names!

Grey wolves have many other names, depending on where they live and how they look. They are known as 'timber wolves' in most parts of USA. In Mexico they are commonly known by a local name, 'lobos'. In Canada they are called 'tundra wolves', 'arctic wolves' or 'white wolves'.

Why do farmers dislike coyotes?

Coyotes are a species of wolf that are found in North and Central America. They are smaller than wolves, and are sometimes called prairie wolves. Coyotes are very interesting animals. Their appearance and behaviour is quite similar to that of dogs. These members of the dog family once lived primarily in open prairies and deserts, but now roam the continent's forests and mountains. Coyotes will eat almost anything. They hunt rabbits, rodents, fish, frogs, and even deer. They also happily dine on insects, snakes, fruit, grass, and carrion. They sometimes kill lambs, calves, or other livestock, as well as pets, and so ranchers and farmers regard them as destructive pests. Coyotes are formidable hunters because they have keen vision and a strong sense of smell. In the fall and winter, they form packs for more effective hunting.

Coyote

Polar Bear

Why is the polar bear able to conserve its body heat?

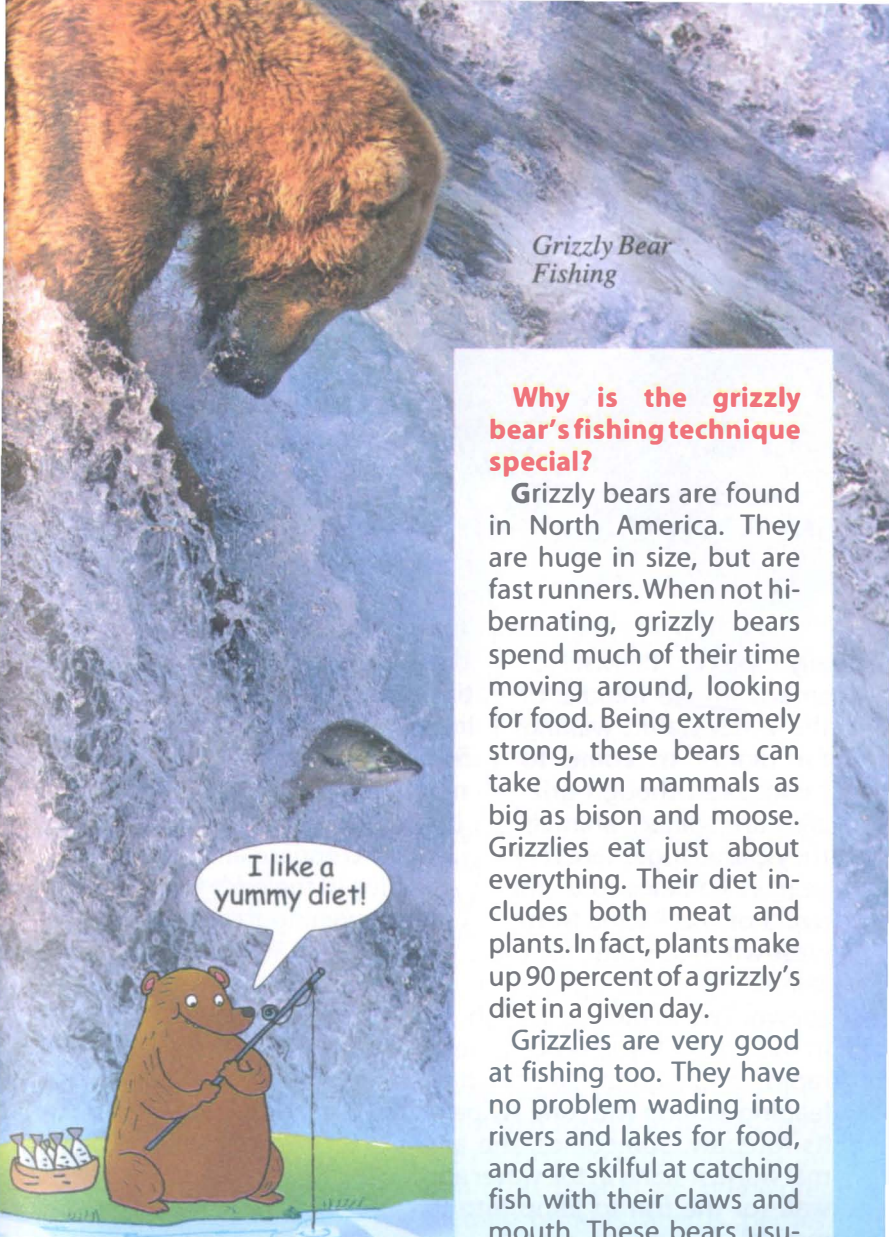
Polar bears are large bears that live in the freezing Arctic regions. They have strong legs with large, flattened feet that help them while walking on ice and swimming. Their wide paws prevent sea ice from breaking by distributing weight while the bear is walking. In addition, the wide paws serve as paddles to help polar bears swim faster.

Fur covers the polar bear's entire body, even the feet, to help keep the bear warm in the bitterly cold climate of the Arctic. The fur has two layers, one for trapping in heat close to the body, and another for trapping heat and repelling water. The outer layer of fur is hollow, and reflects light, giving the fur its white colour. The white fur helps the bear camouflage itself in the snowy habitat. In contrast to its white fur, the skin is black. The black skin readily absorbs sunlight, which helps to keep the bear warm. Polar bears have a layer of blubber below the surface of the skin. The blubber acts as insulation on the body to trap heat. This is especially important while swimming. All these features help the polar bear to conserve its body heat and survive in the icy Arctic climate.

Why is the polar bear an amazing hunter?

Polar bears are carnivores. They eat ringed and bearded seals, but they have been known to eat walruses, other species of seals, belugas, and the carcasses of larger whales. If desperate, a polar bear will eat whatever meat it can find. The first method of hunting seals used by a polar bear is 'still hunting.' In this method, the polar bear remains motionless beside a breathing hole, waiting for a seal to surface. When a seal surfaces, the polar bear bites into the head or upper body, then flips the entire seal onto the ice. Stalking is a hunting method used by polar bears. Once spotted, the seal is slowly and steadily stalked by the polar bear. At 15 to 30 metres away, the polar bear suddenly charges the seal. With its claws or teeth, the polar bear grabs the seal, and kills it. The aquatic stalk is another technique used by polar bears. It will swim toward a seal that is on an ice floe. Once the polar bear reaches the ice edge, it quickly emerges from the water, and grabs the seal with its claws or teeth. It is these different techniques that make the polar bear a truly amazing hunter.

Polar Bear Swimming



Grizzly Bear Fishing

Why is the grizzly bear's fishing technique special?

Grizzly bears are found in North America. They are huge in size, but are fast runners. When not hibernating, grizzly bears spend much of their time moving around, looking for food. Being extremely strong, these bears can take down mammals as big as bison and moose. Grizzlies eat just about everything. Their diet includes both meat and plants. In fact, plants make up 90 percent of a grizzly's diet in a given day.

Grizzlies are very good at fishing too. They have no problem wading into rivers and lakes for food, and are skilful at catching fish with their claws and mouth. These bears usu-

American Black Bear

ally place themselves smack in the middle of the water traffic, waiting for dinner to come to them. Even though grizzlies are solitary animals, they gather together every year in colonies near the rivers of the Pacific Northwest when it is time for the salmon to move upriver to spawn. The salmon leap high in the air as they approach the rapids, and a grizzly can catch a leaping salmon with one swipe of its forepaw. Sometimes, the animal will just stand in the water and wait for the fish to jump into its mouth!

What do we know about the American black bear?

American Black Bears are found only in North America, and are the continent's smallest and most common bears. Black bears are full of curiosity, and have complex family relationships. Although it is a meat eater, most of a black bear's diet is made up of plants. It eats twigs, buds, leaves, nuts, roots, fruit, corn and berries. It also eats bees and honey, and it tears up rotting logs to get at grubs, beetles and insects. The black bear also catches fish, and small to medium-sized mammals, and eats carrion. The black bear is a solitary animal. It is usually crepuscular. That means it is active in the early morning and in the evening. It can run at speeds of up to 48 kilometres per hour, and is an excellent swimmer. It can also climb trees. The black bear has poor eye sight, but it has an excellent sense of hearing, and a keen sense of smell, which is a great help when it is hunting for food.

Asian Black Bear-Vocalizations

Asian black bears make all sorts of noises to communicate with each other. These include grunts, whines, roars, and slurping sounds made when feeding. They also make 'an appalling row', when wounded, alarmed or angry! They sometimes make loud hissing noises as warnings or threats, and scream when fighting. When approaching other bears, they produce 'tut tut' noises, or clucking sounds.

Asian Black Bear

Formosan Black Bear

Why is the Asian black bear called an occasional hunter?

Asian black bears or moon bears are closely related to the North American black bears. They are called moon bears because of the sickle-shaped marking on their chest.

Asian black bears tend to live in mountain forests in many countries across Asia from Iran to Japan. This bear is an omnivore, feeding on nuts, acorns, berries

and other fruit, as well as honey, insects and carrion. It will also, occasionally, prey upon a sheep or mountain goat, which is why it is called an occasional hunter.

Asian black bears climb trees often and with great skill, building 'nests' in which they sleep at a height of up to 40 metres.

In the wild, they prefer to avoid conflict. However, they sometimes attack humans savagely, and if captured, they can be very aggressive. These bears are loners. They are in danger of extinction now because the forests where they live are being cut down, and because they are used in native medicine.

Sloth Bear

How do sloth bears hunt termites?

Sloth bears have shaggy, dusty-black coats, pale, short-haired muzzles, and long, curved claws that they use to excavate ants and termites.

Longest Tail

Sloth bears are one of the eight species of bears worldwide. They were originally classified as 'bear sloths' because of their sloth-like, or sickle-shaped claws. They can hang upside-down like sloths. They have the longest tail in the bear family, running 15 to 18 centimetres long. The tail is hidden in their fur.

They live in Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, and inhabit thorn forests, wet forests, and grasslands. The sloth bear feeds mainly on termites and ants, but will also eat carrion if other food is scarce. Its diet also consists of fruits, berries, grasses, seed pods, flowers, yams, eggs, honey, insect larvae, and other insects.

Sloth Bear on a Tree

However, sloth bears do not fish, hunt animals, or graze. They will turn over rocks and logs and dig as deep as 1.5 metres to feed on large underground insect colonies. They will also continue eating a honeycomb until it is completely gone, even if they are being stung by bees!

Sloth bears feed mainly on termites, and have a special technique for catching them. Their long, curved claws are

Up, They Stand!

The sloth bear too can stand on its back legs, like the other bears. This was once believed to be an aggressive posture, but we now know that the bear is really gaining a clearer view of its surroundings. More importantly, this also helps them to scent the air to find food, or to sense dangers.

What does the spectacled bear prey on?

Spectacled bears are small, shy bears found in the dense jungles of South America. They get their name from the whitish to yellowish rings that encircle their eyes, resembling large spectacles. Spectacled bears eat mainly fruit, berries, cacti, and honey. Spectacled bears are excellent climbers. They may sometimes sit patiently on the branches of a tree for days, waiting for the fruit to ripen! They have extremely strong jaws and wide, flat molars to chew tough vegetation such as tree bark and orchid bulbs. Spectacled bears will sometimes supplement their diet with meat. Their prey consists mainly of small rodents, birds, insects, and even small cows. Sometimes, they get into the habit of preying on cattle, and this gets them killed by farmers.

Spectacled Bears

used for penetrating rock hard nest mounds. Once they've opened a hole, they blow away excess dirt, then noisily suck out the insects through a gap in their front teeth. They do this by closing their nostrils, and using their lips like a vacuum nozzle!

STARFACT

Salmon Harvest

Brown bears love to eat salmon, which is an important source of protein for them. During the spawning season, salmon swim upstream, leaping over rapids to reach their spawning grounds. Brown bears will wait patiently in the water for a fish to leap, and then pounce, to knock it down with a stunning blow, or a killing bite.

Bear Catching a Salmon Fish

CURIOUS FACT

Attacks on Humans

Asian black bears are feared, because they are known to kill livestock and attack humans. Generally speaking, they are aggressive toward people, and can be a major nuisance to the farmers on whose livestock and crops they dine. In turn, they have been nearly eradicated from many parts of their range, due to the value placed on their body parts as ingredients in traditional Asian medicine and as delicacies. As a result, they are considered an endangered species.

Why is the giant panda considered a carnivore?

The giant panda is the rarest member of the bear family. It is a cute and cuddly medium-sized black-and-white bear that lives only in the mountainous temperate forests of southwest China. It is among the world's most threatened animals. Only about 1,600 of these rare bears are left. Giant pandas eat a diet of bamboo. Adult giant pandas will spend 10 to 16 hours a day finding, and eating bamboo.

Giant pandas have a very specialized anatomy linking them to bamboo for survival. Their front paws are specially designed to allow them to hold bamboo stalks. It may eat up to 20 kgs of bamboo each day!

Even though, its diet is made 99 percent of bamboo, a giant panda may eat other foods such as honey, eggs, fish, yams and bananas when available Very rarely, a giant panda will eat small animals if they can catch them, but they're usually dead though. Giant pandas are classified as carnivores, as the classification is by ability to eat, and the panda has the teeth made for ripping flesh.

Bears in Fairy Tales

Bears have played an important role in fairy tales and fables. The most famous fairy tale is probably the one titled 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. There are many versions of this story. Bears are also prominent in mythological stories from different countries.

Shrine for Bear Victims

Kesagake was a japanese brown Bear who went on a rampage and killed seven people in 1915. He was hunted down and killed, and a shrine was erected to the memory of the bear's victims at a place called Rokusensawa. Today, people go to the shrine to pray for those whom the bear killed.

What do brown bears hunt?

Brown bears are found in Northern Eurasia and North America. Standing upright on its hind legs, an average-sized male brown bear may reach 2.1 metres. During the fall, a brown bear eats practically around the clock, to store food for the winter months when it goes into hibernation. Brown bears like to feed in the morning and evening, to avoid the afternoon heat.

Brown Bear

Brown bears like grass, leaves, wild berries, nuts, seeds, fruits, bulbs and tubers. They will also snack on beetles, termite nests, worms, ants, and other insects. They will use the claws on their paws to scrape bark, turn over logs, and disturb dirt mounds to find bugs and other edibles. If available, brown bears will hunt for animal prey. They will eat rodents, squirrels, foxes, and other small animals. They have also been known to attack young deer and sheep. Brown bears love fish, and are fond of salmon. They are excellent at fishing. In fact each bear has its favourite spot and will try to 'reserve' it from other bears.

HUNTERS-RACCOON FAMILY

What does the common raccoon hunt?

Raccoons are small, very adaptable mammals found in North and South America, and a few tropical islands. They are found in forests, marshes, prairies, and even in cities. Raccoons are also known for their excellent night vision and

STARFACT

The Raccoon's Name

The raccoon's scientific name, 'procyon lotor', means 'washer' because it seems to wash its food. Scientists think the reason why raccoons wash their food is to press it and squash it to make sure there are no sharp bones or dangerous bits in the food The name, 'raccoon', may have come from the Algonquin Indian word 'arukun', which means 'he who scratches with his hands'.

Why is the crab eating raccoon interesting?

Crab eating raccoons are found in the marshy and jungle areas of Central and South America. Interestingly, the crab-eating raccoon usually seems to prefer to eat fruit. Of course, like all raccoons, these animals will eat anything they can find- and of course, crabs. One thing that sets this animal apart from other carnivores is its keen sense of hearing. They climb trees well, moving forward or backward on their way up or down the tree. They are one of few animals that can descend a tree headfirst. They can also drop, unharmed, 10 to 15 metres. They are fast runners, and excellent swimmers. They are adaptable, and use their dexterous front paws and long fingers to find and feast on a wide variety of fare.

Raccoons like to live near water, and find a lot of their meals in the water. They hunt at night, and use their lightning-quick paws to grab crayfish, frogs, and other aquatic creatures. On land, they pluck mice and insects from their hiding places, and raid nests for tasty eggs. They also eat fruit, nuts, plants, crops, and garbage.

ability to use the sense of touch to find food. This is a very valuable asset for a nocturnal animal. Crab eating Raccoons tend to prefer to live near water. They have probably been observed eating crustaceans, which led to them being given their common name. Actually, the name is a little misleading, because other raccoons also eat crabs, and the crab eating raccoon eats other food besides crabs!

Crab eating Raccoon

What is the bushy tailed olingo?

Bushy-tailed olingos are found in the rainforests of Central and northern South America. They are light brown in colour, with a pale coloured underside. Their hands and feet have a strong grasp, and they have a long,

Bushy-tailed Olingo

RingTail

The ringtail is a small ground-dwelling mammal found in the arid regions of the Western US. It looks like a cross between a house cat and a raccoon, and displays some of the characteristics that make both species appealing to humans. The ringtail has greyish or brownish fur, and a black and white banded tail. It is an active creature, and can leap like a squirrel and use its sharp claws to climb walls like a spider. These acrobatic skills help the animal hunt. But since it emerges from its den only at night, few humans ever see the ringtail at work.

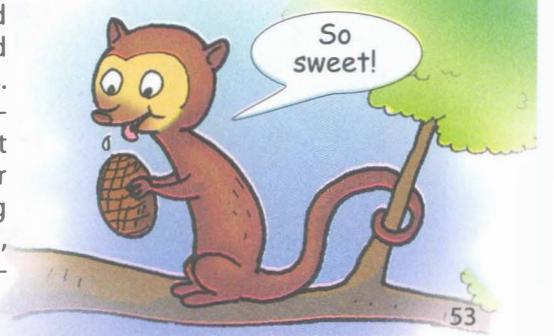
bushy tails. Bushy tailed olingos are able to move around with great skill and agility through the branches of trees. These creatures belong to the same family as raccoons, and are solitary by nature. They rarely venture to the ground, and are active at night. Bushy-tailed olingos mainly feed upon fruit, but they will also hunt and eat insects, small birds, and small mammals. They are fond of nectar too, and they love the nectar of the balsa tree.

Kinkajou

What is the kinkajou's diet?

Kinkajous are very cute relatives of the raccoon. They live in the tropical forests of Central and South America, and spend most of their time in trees. The kinkajou has a prehensile or gripping tail that it uses much like another arm. Kinkajous often hang from this incredible tail, which also aids their balance, and serves as a cozy blanket while the animal sleeps high in the canopy.

Kinkajous are sometimes called honey bears because they raid bees' nests. They use their long, skinny tongues to slurp honey from a hive, and also to remove insects like termites from their nests. They love fruit, and also eat small mammals which they catch with their nimble front paws and sharp claws. They roam and eat at night, and return each morning to sleep in previously used tree holes.

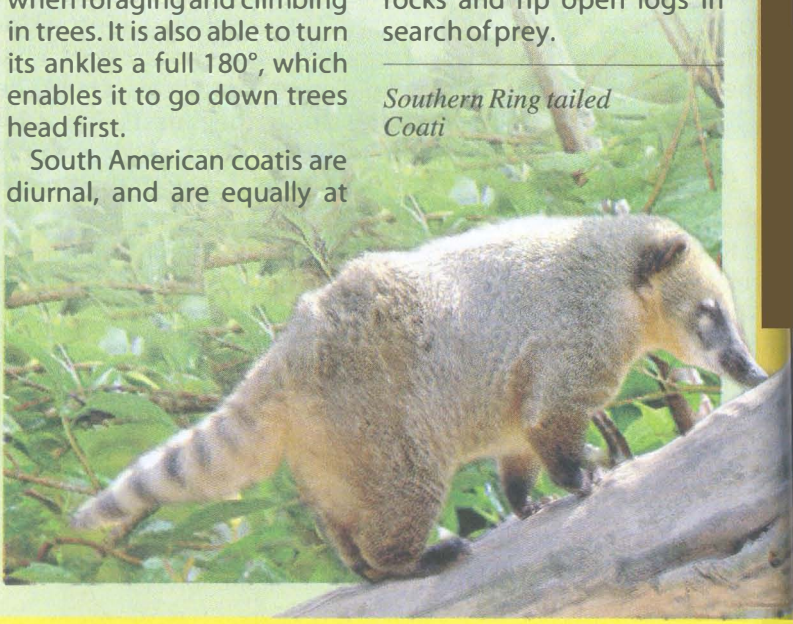


How does the South American coati hunt its prey?

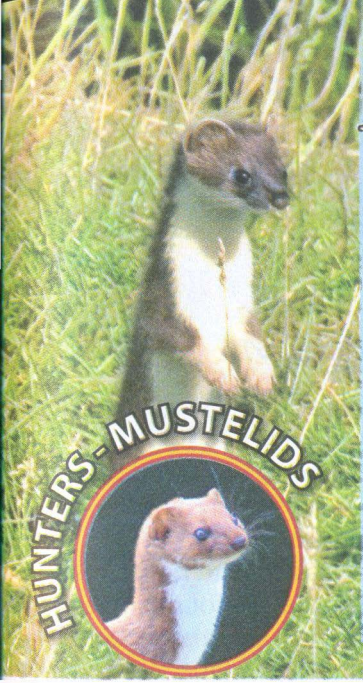
South American coatis are omnivorous members of the raccoon family, and have long mobile snouts, reddish fur, and ringed tails. They are also called southern ring-tailed coatis, and can be found in a number of locations including the Amazon rainforests. This animal has strong front legs and long claws which are very useful when foraging and climbing in trees. It is also able to turn its ankles a full 180°, which enables it to go down trees head first.

South American coatis are diurnal, and are equally at home on the ground, or on trees. They feed on invertebrates, lizards, frogs, fruit, and eggs. They use their snouts to poke through crevices to find animals on the ground. They turn over rocks and rip open logs in search of prey.

White- nosed Coati



Southern Ring tailed Coati



CURIOUS FACT

Stoats

The stoat is a small sized mammal closely related to weasels and ferrets. Stoats are found in moorlands, woodlands, farms, coastal areas, and even mountainous regions across the Northern Hemisphere. Stoats prey on a number of animals including rodents, fish eggs, insects, small reptiles, and amphibians. The stoat's favourite meal however is the rabbit - despite the fact that the stoat is generally much smaller than the rabbit!

Why are mustelids considered fearless hunters?

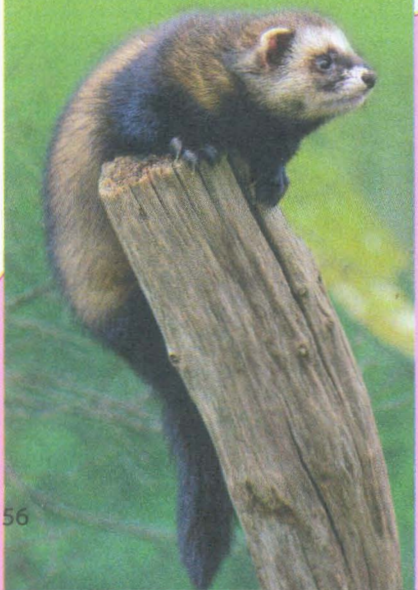
Mustelids are mammals that belong to the weasel family. They are a diverse group of exceptionally tough carnivores. Typically short legged and long bodied, they range from tiny tunnel hunters to diggers, treetop leapers, swimmers, and Arctic scavengers.

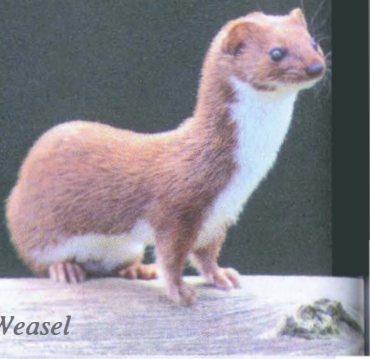
A mustelid's primary sense is smell. Hearing comes in second, in terms of importance. The sense of touch of the mustelids is acute, centered primarily on the face, and based on the long whiskers that sprout from their lips, chin, and brow. These whiskers allow them to precisely target their prey's vital spots, even in complete darkness. Those mustelids that hunt large prey will grab their victim with a bite, then grip it with either the forelegs, or wrap the whole body around it. This allows them to position themselves for a death bite - delivered precisely through the base of the skull, driving their elongated fangs into the brain. They are fearless hunters, attacking animals much bigger than themselves, and they often refuse to back down from overwhelming odds.

European Polecat

The European polecat is a nocturnal, solitary creature. Polecats produce a strong musky scent from anal glands when threatened, and this is also used to mark their territories. They mainly hunt rabbits, small rodents and birds, but polecats also feed on amphibians, carrion, and bird eggs. They stalk their prey, and after seizing it, they kill with a quick bite to the neck.

European Polecat





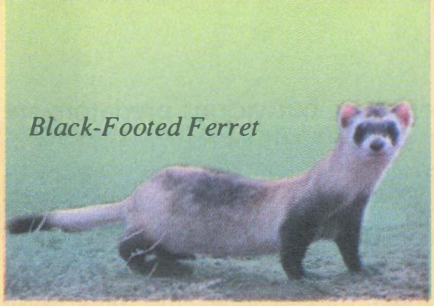
Weasel

Why do we say that the weasel's body is adapted for hunting?

Weasels are furry mammals that are found in North America, northern South America, Europe, Asia, and the extreme north of Africa.

Marbled Polecat

The marbled polecat has white or yellow spots or stripes. It inhabits dry open regions or steppes. It hunts at night, or at twilight for a variety of small animals, especially hamsters. Like most mustelids, the marbled polecat can let off powerful 'stink bombs' from its anal glands when it is threatened or attacked.



Black Footed Ferret

The black-footed ferret is a member of the weasel family. It is the only ferret native to North America. It has short legs with large front paws, and claws developed for digging. Its large skull and strong jaw and teeth are adapted for eating meat. Prairie dogs,a small rabbit sized rodent, make up 90% of a black-footed ferret's diet. A ferret may eat over 100 prairie dogs in one year. Black-footed ferrets are also known to eat ground squirrels, small rodents, rabbits, and birds.

They live almost anywhere they can find cover and prey. This includes sand dunes, grassland, woodland and mountains. There are numerous weasel species that all vary in size, colour and to a slight extent, in their behaviour too. Weasels must eat every 24 hours to avoid starvation, so they are active both day and night.

Marbled Polecat

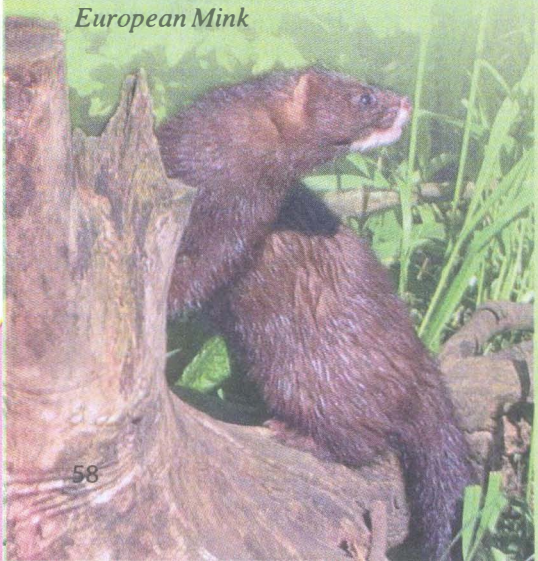
These tiny, but vicious predators are the smallest carnivorous mammals in the world, growing to no more than 15 centimetres from their nose to the tip of their tail.

They are excellent hunters, and eat rodents, such as voles and mice. They also eat birds or eggs when available. Weasels have evolved to prey on small animals. Their long, slender bodies are perfectly suited for following mice into their burrows. Weasels have a small and narrow head which is not much thicker than their neck. This, coupled with their short legs and flexible spine makes it possible for them to easily move around in the small, confined spaces of burrows and tunnels. Weasels are incredibly strong and powerful for their size, and are able to catch and kill animals that are much larger than themselves, before carrying them back to their burrow.

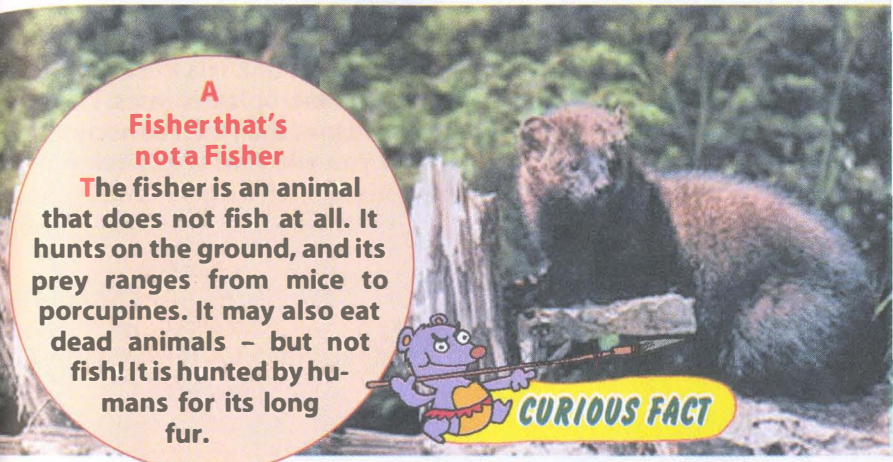
Why are minks hunted as well as being hunters?

A mink is a carnivore found in the Northern Hemisphere. These animals spend much of their time in the water, although they breed and nest on land. These creatures have a distinctive musky odour, which they use to signal each other and to mark territory.

European Mink



Like other creatures in the weasel family, minks have famously long, sleek bodies and short legs. Because these animals are semi aquatic, they have webbed hind feet to help them swim, along with small ears to reduce drag in the water. Mink also have pointed snouts and small, beady eyes which they use to



A Fisher that's not a Fisher

The fisher is an animal that does not fish at all. It hunts on the ground, and its prey ranges from mice to porcupines. It may also eat dead animals – but not fish! It is hunted by humans for its long fur.

CURIOUS FACT

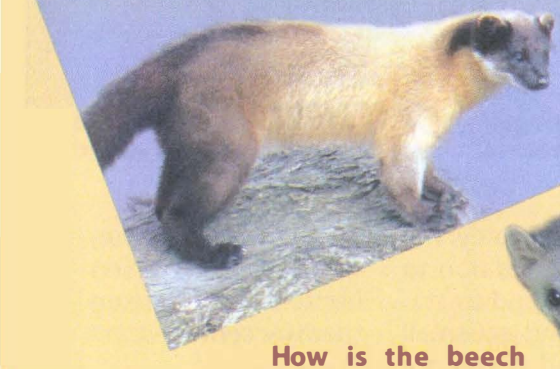
seek out fish and other aquatic prey. The diet of minks can vary. In addition to aquatic animals such as fish and crustaceans, the animals hunt and eat small mammals that live on land. Minks are probably most famous for their distinctively sleek, soft fur, which has caused hunters to pursue them for centuries.

American Mink

Yellow throated Marten

The yellow throated marten has a creamy yellow throat and dark brown coat that has an orange-yellow tint. It is the only one of its species that lives in tropical and sub-tropical forests. These animals are mostly solitary, and because of their excellent climbing skills, the majority of the time you will find them living in trees. They hunt rodents, honey, insects, bird eggs, and frogs. They also eat fruits.

Yellow throated Marten

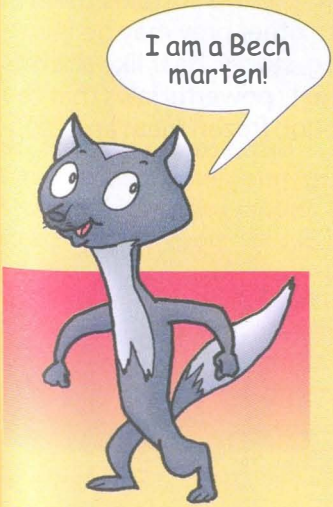


Beech Marten

How is the beech marten different from the European pine marten?

The beech marten or stone marten is thin, long and short-legged. Its brown covering has a white mark at the throat, and this sets it apart from the pine marten, whose marking is cream-coloured A beech martens can be found in mainland Europe as well as in West and Central Asian territories. During daytime, this marten sleeps, and it hunts for prey during the twilight hours. Beech martens are omnivorous creatures and their diet mainly consists of

small mammals, eggs, and earthworms. The pine marten was found throughout most of Central and Northern Europe, but is now extinct in most of England and Wales. Pine martens favour well wooded areas where they can nest in hollow trees, and old animal homes. Pine martens eat small mammals, and seasonally available produce such as autumn fruits and berries. They are also treetop hunters that can race skillfully along branches, leaping from tree to tree in pursuit of squirrels.



Sable

The sable is another mustelid that has been hunted ruthlessly for its fur. It is fast and agile on the ground, and can climb well, if needed. It hunts mainly small animals and eats fruit too.

Sable

What do we know about wolverines?

Wolverines are the largest members of the weasel family. They are found in isolated areas of Canada, North West USA, Northern Europe, and Northern and Eastern Asia. They live in dens amongst roots and rocks, or sometimes they dig a den in a snow drift. They are solitary animals, and they roam a lot, travelling up to 24 kilometres a day. They have heavy, attractive fur that once made them a prime

Wolverine

trapper's target in North America, but they are a protected species in some areas today.

Wolverines eat some plants and berries, in the summer season, but this does not make up a major part of their diet–they are mainly predators, and they love meat. Wolverines easily dispatch smaller prey, such as rabbits and rodents, but may even attack weak or injured animals that are many times their size. They also feed on carrion–the corpses of larger mammals, such as elk, deer, and caribou, and this sustains them in winter when other prey may be fewer. These strong, stocky, bear like animals have extremely powerful jaws that can crunch through frozen meat and bone easily.

Why is the Eurasian badger an interesting carnivore?

Eurasian badgers live in Britain, Ireland, mainland Europe and Asia, and Japan. They live in family groups, known as clans, consisting of up to 12 individuals. They are social creatures, and live together in large underground setts, made up of a series of interlocking tunnels with nest chambers, toilets, and several entrances. They inherit these setts from their parents, while always expanding and refining them. The resulting huge tunnel systems are, in some cases, centuries old.

Eurasian badgers have poor sight and hearing, but their

Eurasian Badger

Zorilla

The zorilla is a skunk-like mammal that lives in the African savannas. It has long, thick black fur with white stripes. Zorillas hunt for their prey in the soil, and they search around in the earth using long claws. They dig for grubs, mice, and other small creatures. The zorilla is often described as the smelliest animal on the planet, because its stinky scent can be smelled up to half a mile away.

STARFACT

Zorilla

sense of smell is excellent, and this helps them in hunting for food. They hunt mostly at night, and have an omnivorous diet. They eat fruit, nuts, bulbs, tubers, acorns, and cereal crops. They also consume a variety of invertebrates like earthworms, wasp and bee nests, birds' eggs, carrion, and live vertebrate prey such as hedgehogs, moles, and rabbits. Did you know that the Eurasian badger eats several hundred earthworms every night?

Greater Grison

Greater grisons have long body, a slim pointed head, and a relatively short tail. They are grey in colour with a black muzzle, throat, chest and underside. They are found in the savannas, grasslands, rainforests and evergreen forests of Southern Mexico, Central and South America. They are usually found near water and are agile runners, swimmers, and climbers. They feed on small vertebrates, including fish, and kill their prey by giving them a swift bite at the back of the neck.

Greater Grimso

Badger

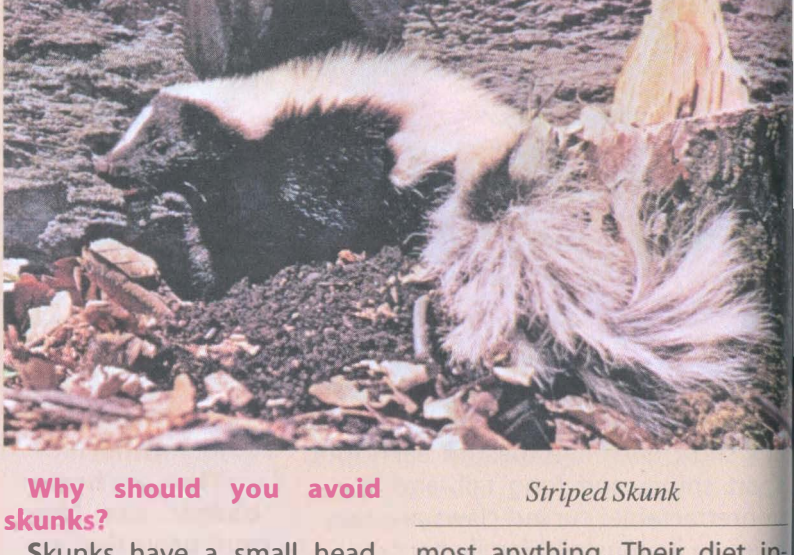
What do we know about badgers?

Badgers belong to one of the largest carnivore families – the mustelid. The badger's short ears, five toes on each foot, short snout, and long tail, and long, nonretractable, curved claws are also clues to its mustelid family heritage. All species of badgers are similar in appearance. Fur coat colours range from silver-gray, dark brown or black to spotted or striped.

Badgers are omnivorous, and generally quite fearless when hunting prey, or when threatened. They feed on worms, grubs, mice, squirrels, and other small animals, as well on fruits and honey. Though badgers are social animals, the American badger, which is smaller than the European badger, is solitary by nature. The Palawan stink badger is another badger that prefers to stay alone. All badgers release an offensive odour when irritated, so be careful when approaching them!

Helping Each Other

The honey badger has long front paws that are well adapted for digging. Honey badgers prey on worms, termites, scorpions, porcupines, and hares. The honey badger and the honey guide bird help each other in finding bees nests. The bird guides the badger to the nest, and the badger forces the nest open so that both of them can feast on the honey and grubs that are found inside the nest.



Striped Skunk

Why should you avoid skunks?

Skunks have a small head, stocky body, and fluffy tail. Their fur can be black or reddish brown, with a white stripe along each side. Skunks feed on almost anything. Their diet includes a variety of small animals, insects, fruits and vegetable matter. They also eat birds and birds' eggs, as well as fish, fruits and seeds. Skunks live under a rock or in a burrow, or even among bushes. If you happen to see one, it is best to avoid it. Do you know why? If a skunk feels threatened, it will arch its back, fluffs its fur, and raise its tail to eject a powerful stream of a foul smelling liquid from two nozzle-like ducts protruding from its anus. This stream can be ejected on an enemy standing up to three metres away, so it is best to keep your distance!

Why are the feeding habits of sea otters special?

Sea otters are sleek, furry, marine mammals that live along rocky Pacific Ocean coasts, bays, and kelp beds. They have no insulating layer of fat- but are kept warm in the cold Pacific Ocean by their dense fur and high metabolism. They have the densest fur of any mammal-the coat of a sea otter has over half a million hairs per 6.5 square centimetres!

Sea Otters hunt for their prey in the ocean, and on the sea floor. They eat clams, snails, abalone, crabs, starfish, mussels, scallops, squid, small octopuses, sea urchins, prawns, sea cucumbers, limpets, marine worms, several types of fish, and a variety of other things. In all, they eat about 160 different types of food!

Sea otters have a unique way of eating. They use their stomachs as a table by placing all their food on it. When sea otters bring up hard shells with prey inside, they also bring up a big piece of rock. They then bang the hard shell on the rock until it opens enough, so they can eat what is inside! Sea otters use the loose folds of skin as shopping bags. For example, a sea otter could tuck scallops, sea urchins, crabs, or other edibles in the loose folds of skin under its arm! Sea otters have to eat at least twenty-five percent of their body weight each day to keep warm in the cold Pacific Ocean.

Sea Otter Catching Prey

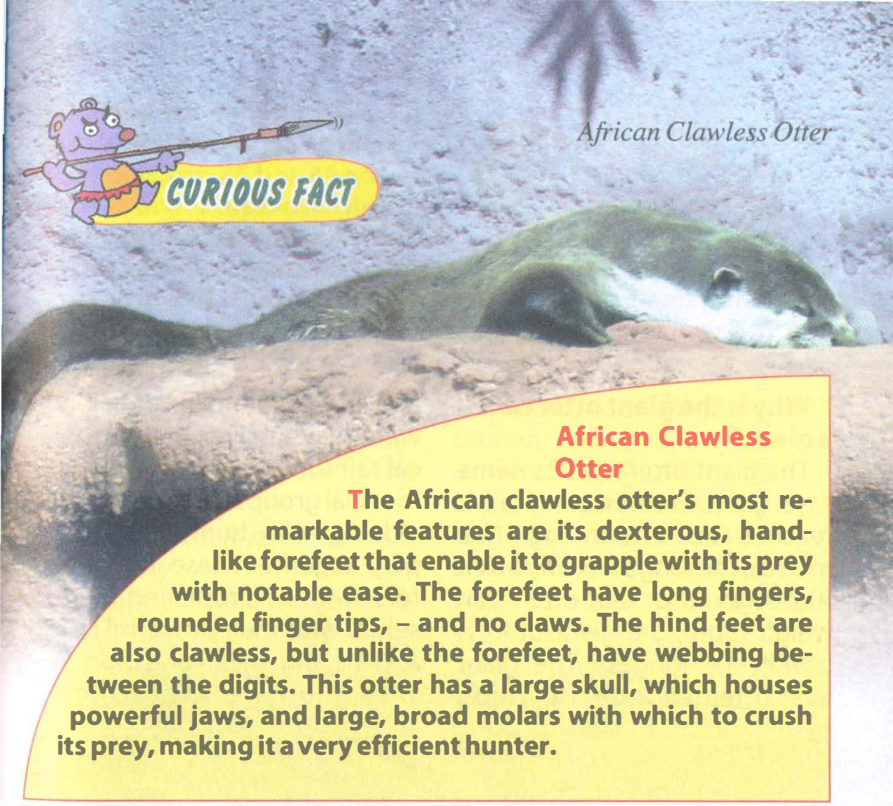
Jackson's Chameleon

The Jackson's chameleon, also known as Jackson's three-horned chameleon, comes from Africa. The name three-horned chameleon is derived from the male having three brown horns. They eat insects and other invertebrates. They use their sticky tongues to capture prey.

What do we know about the North American river otter and European otter?

The North American river otter is the largest member of the family Mustelidae. It is found in both Canada and America, and it lives near the water. North American river otters are well suited for life in the water, with a nose and ears that can close while swimming. The eyes are near the top of the head, and they have a third clear eyelid called a nictitating membrane that protects the eye underwater. Oily fur and a layer of fat keep their bodies warm in cold waters. The sensitive whiskers and acute sense of smell help them to locate food in the water. North American river otters are carnivorous in nature, and feed on slow moving fish such as catfish. They also eat crayfish, clams, frogs, reptiles, birds, insects, and small mammals. They catch their prey under-

North American River Otter



African Clawless Otter

African Clawless Otter

The African clawless otter's most remarkable features are its dexterous, hand-like forefeet that enable it to grapple with its prey with notable ease. The forefeet have long fingers, rounded finger tips, – and no claws. The hind feet are also clawless, but unlike the forefeet, have webbing between the digits. This otter has a large skull, which houses powerful jaws, and large, broad molars with which to crush its prey, making it a very efficient hunter.

water with their mouths, and eat them immediately.

European otters are small members of the weasel family that have taken to water. Their bodies are covered with an oil that acts as a water repellent ,and is so effective that the skin never gets wet. They have flaps over their ears, and a nose that close shut while the otter is swimming. However, the eyes remain open. They can hold their breath for twenty seconds, and can swim underwater for four hundred metres.

European otters eat fish, eels, insects, birds, frogs, baby rabbits, and crustaceans. European otters living along coastal waters feed mostly on crabs and dogfish. They hunt by cornering their prey in weeds, and catching them in their mouths. They feed on their catch immediately after they reach the shore.

Smallest Otter

Oriental small-clawed otters are the smallest otters. They have a body length between 45 and 61 cms, a tail length between 25 and 35 cms, and they weigh between 1 and 5 kgs. They are found in the mangrove swamps and freshwater wetlands of East to South Asia. Oriental small-clawed otters

Why is the giant otter called a giant?

The giant otter is, as its name says, giant. Fr
reaches an astounding 1.82 metres, the longest of any otter. Although the sea otter can weigh more, the giant otter is clearly the longest. The giant river otter feeds on fish, crabs, and snakes found in, and along waterways. It lives in the tropical rainforest in South America in social groups of up to 10 individuals, who hunt, sleep and play together.These huge otters swim by propelling themselves with their powerful tails, and flexing their long bodies. They also have webbed feet,

Giant Otters

feed on frogs, crabs, crayfish, and shellfish. Unusually for otters, fish are not an important part of their diet. They find their prey by feeling under stones with their front paws, and they hold prey in them while they consume it.

water-repellent fur to keep them dry and warm, and nostrils and ears that close in the water.

Giant otters likes to eat fish, preferably perch, catfish, and members of the characin family, but when it cannot find any good fish, it can feed on small caiman, crustaceans, and small snakes. When hunting, The giant otter uses mostly its eyesight, but it also uses its hearing and smell when possible in the water. Fi

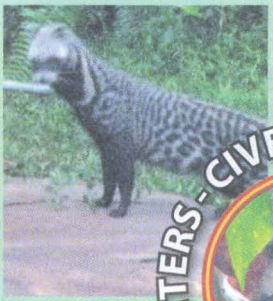
or alone. In groups the otters normally hunt in deeper water. Alone, a giant Otter usually hunts in shallow water, where fish try to hide in the foliage. In a day, the giant otter can eat 6-9 pounds of seafood.

The Black Panther of Sivanippalli

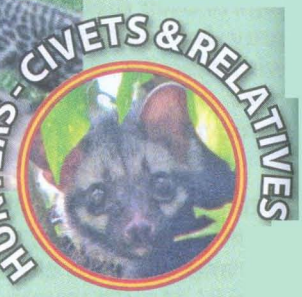
'The Black Panther of Sivanipalli' is an exciting story by Kenneth Anderson. It is a real life adventure story set in the deep jungle, with

Kenneth Anderson

snakes, bison and tigers. This book concentrates mainly on panthers or leopards as they are also known. Anderson hailed from a Scottish family settled in India for six generations. His books are hailed as classics of jungle lore.



Civet



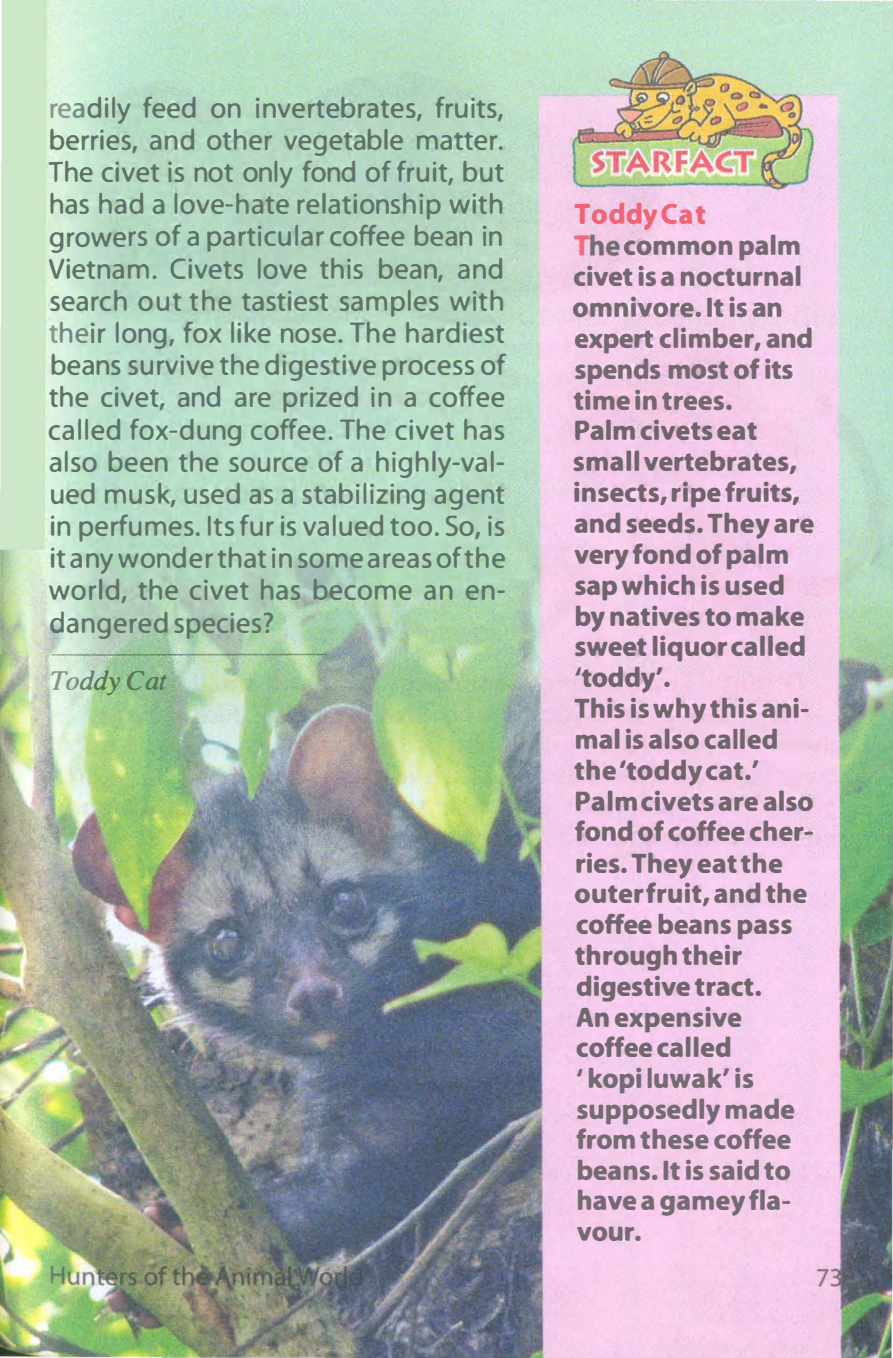
Why are civet cats endangered?

The civet cat, also called the civet, is not a cat at all. Although it is related distantly to the feline family, it is most closely related to the mongoose. It is found in Africa and the East Indies. This cat gets a lot of attention because of its unique appearance and traits. It has a weasel-like face and a cat-like body, with a raccoon's tail. These animals are secretive and nocturnal. Civets are mainly carnivorous, preying on snakes and small mammals, but they also

African Civet- An Illustration

readily feed on invertebrates, fruits, berries, and other vegetable matter. The civet is not only fond of fruit, but has had a love-hate relationship with growers of a particular coffee bean in Vietnam. Civets love this bean, and search out the tastiest samples with their long, fox like nose. The hardiest beans survive the digestive process of the civet, and are prized in a coffee called fox-dung coffee. The civet has also been the source of a highly-valued musk, used as a stabilizing agent in perfumes. Its fur is valued too. So, is it any wonder that in some areas of the world, the civet has become an endangered species?

Toddy Cat



Toddy Cat

The common palm civet is a nocturnal omnivore. It is an expert climber, and spends most of its time in trees. Palm civets eat small vertebrates, insects, ripe fruits, and seeds. They are very fond of palm sap which is used by natives to make sweet liquor called 'toddy'. This is why this animal is also called the 'toddy cat.' Palm civets are also fond of coffee cherries. They eat the outer fruit, and the coffee beans pass through their digestive tract. An expensive coffee called 'kopi luwak' is supposedly made from these coffee beans. It is said to have a gamey flavour.

Egyptian Mongoose

Oriental Linsang

How does the Egyptian mongoose eat eggs?

The Egyptian mongoose lives in Africa on the savannah. It prefers shrub thickets, rocky areas, small woodlands and for-

Oriental Linsang and Binturong

The linsang is a nocturnal, tree-dwelling, carnivorous mammal of the civet family. Oriental linsangs are very graceful animals that use their tails, both for balance and as a brake. They hunt small animals like frogs, snakes, rats and mice. A binturong has a face like a cat's, and a body like a bear's, long, shaggy black hair, stiff white whiskers, and a prehensile tail that is as long as its body. Binturongs, also called bear cats, are classed as carnivores, but eat mostly fruit. However, they do eat small invertebrates, fish, and birds' eggs.

Binturong

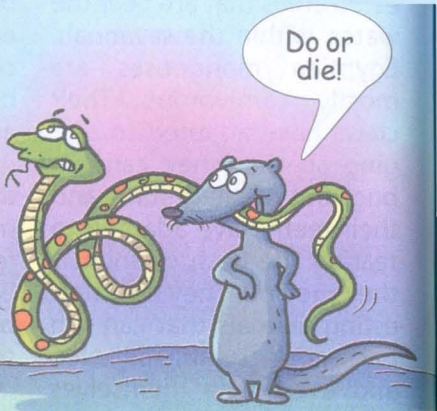
ested areas that are near the water, within the savannah. Egyptian mongooses are mostly carnivorous. Their claws have adapted to digging so that they can dig bugs out of the ground, and their teeth have adapted to tearing the flesh of animals they prey on. They are interesting animals that can run backwards, swim, roll over, and even raise themselves up on two feet. But, that's not all. They try to increase their apparent size to look more impressive and threatening, and they do this by raising their fur, and arching their backs, just like cats. These animals eat fruit if it is available. Their typical diet consists of rodents, fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects and insect larvae. Egyptian mongooses also feast on the eggs of the birds and amphibians. This mongoose has a special technique for eating eggs. It will pick up the egg with its forepaws, and throw it between its legs at a large stone, so that the egg breaks!

Falanouc

The falanouc is an unusual-looking mammal that looks like a cross between a civet and a mongoose. Falanoucs are thought to be predominantly nocturnal, spending daylight hours of resting in burrows or rocky crevices. They are found in the rainforests and marshes of Madagascar. They have long front claws that they use to dig in the soil for worms, grubs, insects, slugs, snails and rodents.

Falanouc

Banded Mongoose



Why do snakes fear the mongoose?

The mongoose is only a little longer than a foot, yet this intelligent little mammal is feared by some of the deadliest snakes in the world. There are over 40 species of mongooses, ranging in size from the dwarf mongoose, which is just over a foot long, to the crab eating mongoose of Southeast Asia, which is about four feet long. Most have short legs with long bodies, long bushy tails, small ears, and pointed noses. They are cov-

Dwarf Mongoose of Africa

Smallest Mongoose

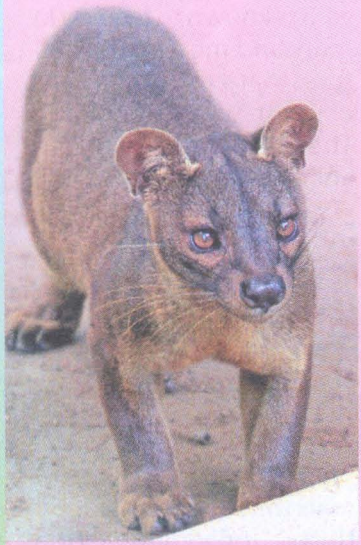
The dwarf mongoose is the smallest mongoose. It is found in Africa, and may only weigh around 250 gms. These animals live in groups of 2 - 20 individuals. The group inhabits a burrow, often making use of a termite mound for this. They feed on termites, insects, lizards, snakes, birds' eggs and mice.

ered with thick, coarse, gray to brown fur.

The mongoose is most famous for being a snake killer. Though it is much smaller than a snake, it relies on its speed, agility and coarse fur which can be fluffed up to afford some protection from a snake's bite. Its strategy is to first tire the snake by launching mock attacks. It will dart this way and that, keeping just out of the snake's reach, and dodging its strikes, until the snake becomes exhausted and slow. The mongoose then goes in for the kill with a fatal bite to the back of the neck.

Depending on the species, in addition to snakes, a mongoose's diet might include insects, earthworms, snails, lizards, frogs, rodents, eggs, fruit, and crabs.

Common Dwarf Mongoose



Fossa

Why are fossas strange looking?

The fossa is Madagascar's largest carnivore. It is a slender-bodied, catlike creature with little resemblance to its mongoose cousins. Unlike mongooses, and more like felines, the fossa has retractable claws, fearsome catlike teeth, and its muzzle resembles that of a dog. The fossa has a long tail that comes in handy while hunting and moving amongst the tree branch-

es. It is known to feed on lemurs and most other creatures that it can get its claws on, from wild pigs to mice. The elusive fossa is a solitary animal, and spends its time both in the trees and on the ground. It is active at night, and also during the day. Presently, fossas are endangered creatures because most of Madagascar's original forests have been destroyed by Man.

Meerkat

Meerkats are social animals that live in colonies of thirty individuals. They use their long front paws to dig burrows and find food. Their diet consists mainly of spiders and other small animals, as well as roots and bulbs. Meerkats post sentries while searching for food. These sentries stand upright on their hind feet atop mounds, and cheep, cluck, bark, or growl a warning when a threat appears.

Meerkat

Striped Hyenas

OTHER HUNTERS

Why are hyenas powerful predators?

Hyenas look like dogs, but are more closely related to cats and civets. They have a sloping back, and are found mainly in Africa, though some species are found in Asia too. They inhabit grasslands, woodlands, savannahs, sub deserts, forest edges and mountains. They are social animals that communicate with one another through specific calls, postures, and signals. Hyenas have a broad muzzle, and extremely strong jaws. Their teeth are very strong too, and made for crushing bones. These features make them powerful predators. The hyena is a skillful hunter, but also an opportunistic scavenger. It consumes animals of various types and sizes, carrion, bones, vegetable matter and other animals' drop-

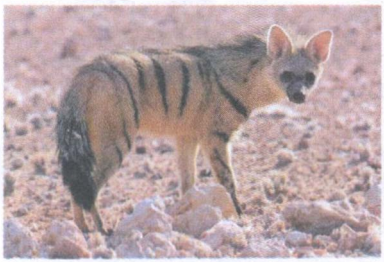
Spotted and Striped Hyenas

Hyenas can be spotted or striped. Spotted hyenas are the largest in the species. They make many sounds, including thefamous'hyena laugh', which signifies submission to a senior member of the clan.

Striped hyenas inhabit open country, as well as the forests of India and the seashore, scavenging on dead animals which wash up from the sea. These hyenas are mainly active at night, resting by day under protruding rocks.

Spotted Hyena

pings. Several members of a clan may form a pack to hunt large prey like zebra. The powerful jaws and digestive tract of the hyena allow it to process and obtain nutrients from skin and bones. The only parts of prey not fully digested are hair, horns, and hooves. The hyena consumes up to one third of its body weight in one meal, it really stuffs itself when feeding! Reputed to be cowardly and timid, the hyena can be bold and dangerous, attacking animals and humans. Did you know that in ancient Egypt, hyenas were domesticated, fattened, and eaten?



Aard Wolf

Parasitic Wasps

Parasitic wasps are small and agile. A parasitic wasp is able to kill a much larger spider, by paralyzing the spider with its sting. The wasp will then lay her eggs inside the spider's body. When the eggs hatch, the spider becomes a living food source for the babies. The spider's body is eaten from the inside out, by the offspring of the parasitic wasp.

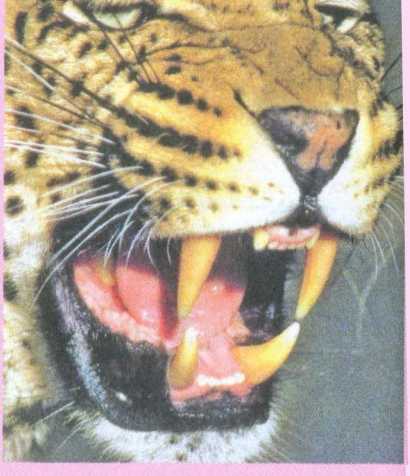
How do mandrills hunt?

Mandrills are the world's largest monkey species. They are found in the dense rain forests, coastal forests, and sometimes the savannah areas of West Central Africa. Mandrills are ferocious predators- and they are ferocious looking too, with red, blue and white stripes on their face. Mandrills are social animals, and they live in enormous groups that can consist of as many as 200 members. During the day, mandrills will spend most of their time on the forest floor, but at night, they will sleep up in the trees for safety.

Mandrills obtain their food by foraging on the ground. Their diet mainly

Mandrill

consists of spiders, ants, snails, worms, grasses, herbs, leaves, nuts, bark, tubers, shoots, roots, and fruit. They also hunt larger prey, and their hunting technique is noisy. A large group will run screaming into the forest, scattering the terrified prey. The females and young males herd the fleeing victims towards the centre, where the hapless prey are killed or injured and left on the ground, while the mandrills continue their onslaught. At a given signal, the killing spree stops, and the group comes back to feed on the dead or dying prey. Did you know that mandrills' cheeks have built-in pouches that are used to store snacks for consuming later?



Leopard

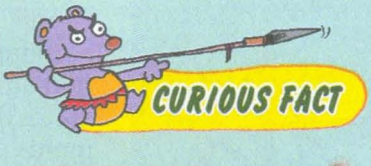
How is a predator able to hunt its prey?

We know that predators are wild animals that hunt, or prey on other animals. These animals need the flesh of the animals that they kill to survive. Predators come in many sizes and shapes. They can be as tiny as a bug, or as large as a polar bear. The way a predator hunts, catches, and kills food is determined by many factors such as the adaptations of the predator and the prey, and the type of habitat they live in.

Predators have different weapons that are used to kill and eat prey. The specific 'weapons' they have are also considered adaptations.

Three of the main weapons on predators are sharp teeth, claws and jaws. Vision is often the most important sense for a predator. A predator's eyes are usually located in front of its head. The forward location of the eyes gives binocular-type vision. Predators that hunt at night have special mirror-like structures in the back of their eyes. These structures help the animal to see in the dark. Most predators have a very good sense of hearing. Some animals don't need ears to hear. Instead, they rely on vibrations they feel in their bodies. Smell is very important for a predator. Some predators can smell a meal from 1.5 kilometres away! Fo
even able to smell food which is buried under half metre so f soil. A snake uses its tongue to smell.

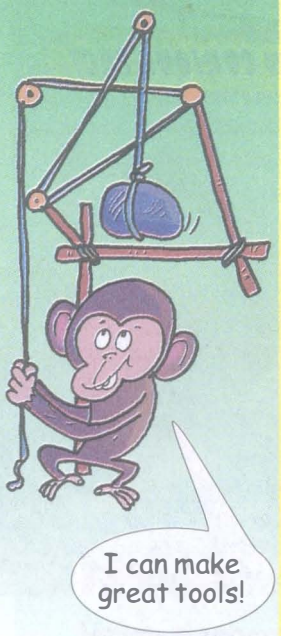
Using these weapons, a predator will chase, stalk, or ambush its prey. Sometimes, the predator will hunt alone, but some animals hunt in teams.



Solendon

A Poisonous Mammal

Solendons are found in the West Indies. These curious mammals are large, long-tailed, and shrew like. The snout of this species is long and mobile. The solendon searches for food on the forest floor. It uses its sharp claws to scrabble for insects, worms, small lizards, fruit and other plant material. Its bite is poisonous, and is used to stun its prey.



Chimpanzee

Why are chimpanzees called tool users?

Chimpanzees are closely related to humans. These great apes are primates that live in a variety of environments in Western and Central Africa. Chimpanzees have a short body and very long arms, with hands that are very similar to ours. Their senses are very similar to ours too, whether it be hearing, sight, smell, taste, or touch.

Chimpanzees forage for food in the forests during the day, eating leaves, fruit, seeds, tree bark, plant bulbs, tender plant shoots, and flowers. They also eat termites, ants, and small animals. They are very intelligent, and can learn extremely complex tasks. They often use tools in the wild. When hunting termites, a chimpanzee will use a twig as a tool. It pokes the twig into the entrance tunnels of termites' nests. The termites think the twig is an intruder, and will attack it, fastening themselves to the twig with their jaws. The chimpanzees will then withdraw the termite covered twig, and lick off the insects. Chimpanzees will also use sticks to probe for ants, bees and honey, to break open ants' nests, and to scare away intruders. They use chewed-up leaves like a sponge to sop up water to drink. Is it any wonder that chimpanzees are considered to be efficient tool users?

Scorpions

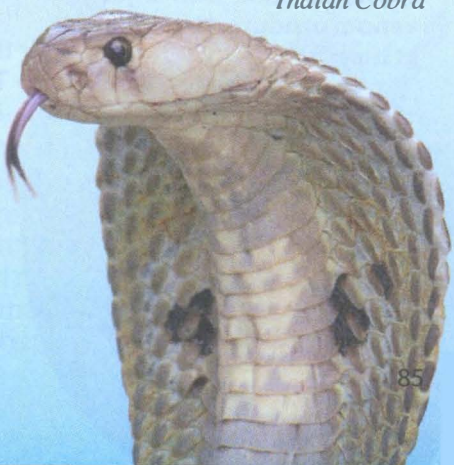
Scorpions have been around for 400 million years. They have a nasty sting, which they use mainly for defence. However, they also use the sting when hunting prey. A scorpion's stinger is at the end of its long tail. There are almost 2,000 scorpion species, but only 30 or 40 have strong enough poison to kill a person.

How do snakes hunt?

Snakes use a combination of senses to find their prey, relying especially on smell. A snake has a regular nose, but it also uses its forked tongue to pick up chemical traces. The tongue is then inserted into pits on the roof of the mouth, called the Jacobson's organ. It is this organ that analyses the chemicals, and not the tongue, which has no taste or smell buds. Heat is another important sense, especially for night-hunting snakes. Snakes have heat-detecting sensors concentrated as two large pits between their nostril and eyes. They allow the snake to strike accurately at warm-blooded prey in the dark. Snakes don't have external ears, or even a middle ear. They only have a small bone which connects the jaw bone to the inner ear canals. A snake picks up sound through the skin, which passes on to this jaw bone.

Snakes relay heavily on stealth and surprise when hunting prey. They hide themselves, or rely on camouflage. Most snakes lunge out at the last moment to seize prey. Large tree snakes jump onto their prey from branches. Once they catch their prey, snakes ensure their meals by smothering, injecting a toxin, or simply eating their prey alive.

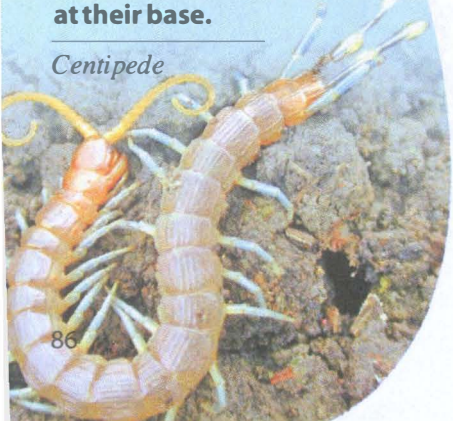
Indian Cobra



Poisonous Centipede

Centipedes are often called 100-legged worms, and have one pair of legs on each of their body segments. Most centipede species feed on small creatures such as insects. They catch their prey with their powerful jaws, and then kill it by injecting it with venom. They possess maxillipeds, which are a modified pair of front legs that curve around the head. Maxillipeds enter a victim's tissue and inject venom produced by a gland at their base.

Centipede



Ant-lion

Why are ant-lions known as stone throwers?

Ant-lions are the larvae of 'doodle-bugs', which are insects related to lacewings and alder flies. They are found in sandy places in the tropics or sub-tropics, and live in pits as large as 10cms in diameter and 50cms deep, that they dig themselves. To do this, the ant-lion walks backwards in a circle, gradually spiralling inwards. It takes sand on its head and throws it either to one side or to the other, to create the pit. These pits act as death-traps for insects on which the larvae feed.

Once the pit is dug, the ant lion hides by burying itself at the bottom of the pit, with just its enormous, pincer-like jaws protruding, and waiting for an unfortunate victim to fall inside.

Net-throwing Spider

If a prey that has fallen in tries to climb out, the ant-lion throws sand at it, knocking it back into the centre of the pit, to be killed and eaten. The ant-lion is one of the few animals who hurl projectiles at their prey, and such animals are sometimes called stone throwers.

How does a spider catch its prey?

Spiders are predators, and their hunting techniques are unique. Different spiders employ different hunting strategies. Some species build intricate webs to ensnare passing insects. Other spiders, such as the various wolf spiders, seek their prey out on the ground. Trap door spiders dig holes, cover them up with dirt doors hinged with spider silk, and lie in wait for passing prey. Similarly, some spiders hide inside flowers to catch

Jumping Spiders

Jumping spiders are small, and can run, climb, and jump. Jumping spiders can jump up to 50 times their own length to land on unsuspecting prey. They hunt actively rather than catching prey in a web, and they have excellent vision, with four big eyes in front, and four smaller eyes on the top of their head. They are widely distributed over the planet, and can even be found up on Mount Everest!

feeding insects by surprise.

The bolas spider lays out a line of sticky silk and swings it around in front of itself. Whilst doing this, it emits a chemical that attracts male moths who think that they may have found a mate. These male moths fly right into the swinging silk, making an easy meal for the spider. Once the prey is trapped, the spider uses its sharp fangs to inject its venom into the prey. This venom contains enzymes that dissolve the prey, and the liquefied contents are sucked in by the spider. Its no wonder that spiders are considered one of the world's ultimate predators!

Spitting Spider

Spitting Spider

The spitting spider catches its prey by spitting at it. It has poison glands in its head, and spinning glands in its abdomen. When it spots a prey, it spits a sticky, poisonous silk at the insect, in a zig-zag pattern, to stop the bug from struggling. The hapless victim is stuck to a surface, and the spider then enjoys its meal.

Bat

Why are bats able to hunt efficiently at night?

Bats are fascinating animals – they are the only mammals that can fly! They are predators that are only active at night, dusk ,and dawn. There are two reasons for this. The first is to avoid the fierce flying predators that are active in the daytime, and the second is to take advantage of the abundance of insect species that are active at night. Bats are able to find their prey in the dark because they have developed a remarkable navigation system called echolocation. During echolocation, a series of short, high-pitched sounds are emitted by an animal. These sounds travel out away from the animal, and then bounce off objects and surfaces in the animal's path creating an echo. The echo returns to the bat, giving it a sense about what is in its path, as well as the size, shape, direction, distance, and motion of the object. This echolocation system is so accurate that bats can detect insects the size of gnats and objects as fine as a human hair. Isn't that remarkable?

How does the frog catch its prey?

Frogs eat almost any live prey they can find, including insects, snails, spiders, worms, or small fish. Some larger frogs eat even larger prey. Most frogs catch insects with a long sticky tongue. The frog will first wait for the prey to settle. Then, in less than a second, its tongue rolls out, adheres to the prey, and rolls back into the frog's mouth with the prey sticking to it. The frog's tongue is fastened to the front of its mouth, not the back, so that it can be flipped out a long way. Its mouth is equipped with feeble, practically useless teeth, which are present only in the upper jaw. So, it must live mostly on small creatures that it can swallow in one gulp. However, not all frogs have tongues. Tongue less frogs use their

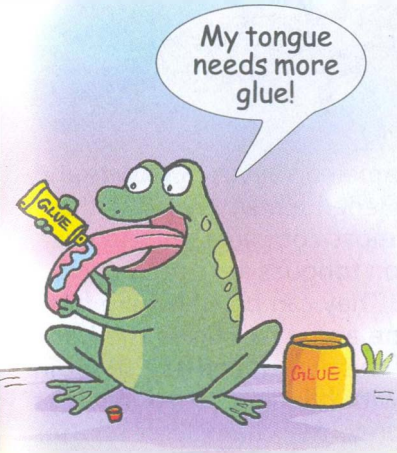
Frog

Praying Mantis

The praying mantis gets its name from its prominent front legs, which are bent and held together at an angle, so that the creature looks as though it is praying. It has a triangular head on a long 'neck', and can turn its head 180 degrees to scan its surroundings with two large compound eyes, and three other simple eyes located between them. When a prey comes close, the praying mantis will turn its head to face the insect, shoot out its spiny arm, and grab the prey.

Grass Hopper

● *Manu Agarwal*



fingers to catch prey and stuff it into their mouths. Frogs and toads help man by eating many harmful insects to be found in gardens and on farms

Why are crocodiles deadly predators?

Crocodiles are magnificent creatures that have been around since the time of the dinosaurs. They will eat mostly whatever they can find. They are carnivorous, and smaller crocodiles live on fish, rodents, and small animals. Large crocodiles kill larger prey, and the largest ones have been known to catch cows, buffalos, or horses.

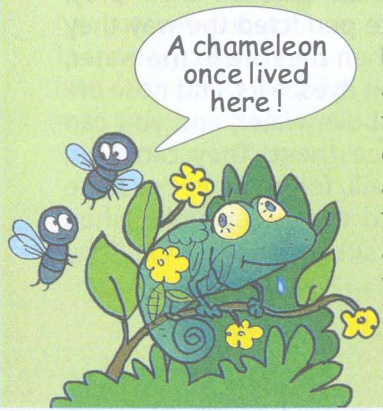
Crocodiles ambush their prey, and have perfected the way they hunt. When they are in the water, only their eyes, ears, and nose are visible above water, and you can barely see them. They can wait, deadly still, for hours in the same spot, and then, they strike when the prey comes within range. They

Crocodiles

Chameleon

Why are chameleons successful hunters?

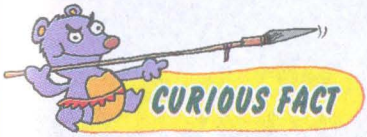
Chameleons are reptiles that are famous for their ability to change colour. Changing colour is a form of communication, a response to temperature, light, and mood, as well as a defence against predators. A chameleon's eyes can rotate and swivel independently, enabling them to see almost complete 360-degrees. Chameleon tongues are extremely fast and long. They can be anywhere from one to one and a half times the body length of the owner, and can shoot in and out with blinding speed. When it spots a prey, the chameleon focuses both eyes on it. Its mouth opens slightly, and in a flash, the tongue appears, and the prey disappears! So, although a chameleon is considered to be a slow animal, its extraordinary eyes and tongue with lightening speed makes it a highly successful hunter. A chameleon will generally eat anything including berries, insects, and worms. Some of the larger chameleon species will also hunt small reptiles.



lunge, with the help of their strong tail, and strike faster than the prey can move.

Crocodile teeth are sharp and deadly, and the combination of the strong jaw pressure and their sharp teeth is a deadly weapon. They can kill and crush, but they can't chew, so food must be swallowed in its entirety. If they catch a prey that is too big to swallow at once, they shake their heads, and thrash it on the water to tear it into smaller pieces. Crocodiles are smart, have good memories, and their bodies are designed for the camouflage and kill, which is why they are deadly predators.

Anteater



The Tamandua

Tamanduas are commonly called the lesser anteater, as they are much smaller than the giant anteater, but larger than the silky anteater. They detect ants and termites by their scent, and then dig for their meal. The tamandua itself is a bit of a 'stinker', as it gives off a special smell which people find offensive!

● *Sneha Rao*

Aardvark

What do you know about ant eating animals?

Ant eating animals are toothless mammals that feed on thousands of ants, termites, and insect larva on a daily basis. They have poor eyesight, but a great sense of smell and hearing. Most are nocturnal creatures that burrow in holes during the day, and forage along the ground and within the trees during the night. Ant eating animals use their front claws to pry open hidden insect colonies, and use their long sticky tongue to lap up the insects and the larva.

Aardvarks are ant eating animals that are found in Africa. The most noticeable feature of an aardvark is its long, extended pig-like snout. The giant anteater is found in South America. It has is a long bushy tail, and elongated pointed

snout. Located in Africa and Asia, a pangolin has a lizard-like body that is completely covered in scales. The silky anteater is found in South America. It has an extremely small body, and is completely covered in silky fur. The tamandua, or collared anteater, has a medium sized body that is completely covered in fur.

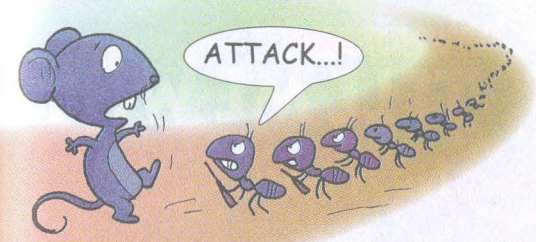
Anteater

Anteaters commonly inhabit areas where insects are plentiful such as grasslands, savannahs, swamplands and the rainforest. They are known for their slow, shuffling walk and their long noses.

Army Ants

Why are army ants amazing insects?

Army ants are amazing insects. They live in Central and South America, and have a completely carnivorous diet. An awesome example of social cooperation, army ants overwhelm their prey through their sheer force of numbers. They live in huge colonies that consist of queen ants, soldier ants, and multi-purpose



worker ants. In the army ant colony, the queen ant lays eggs, the soldiers focus their attention on the defence of the colony, and the worker ants are split between being foragers, or tending to the queen's brood.

Due to their large colony sizes, army ants must migrate in order to find food. When they are on the move, army ants live in temporary nests that they build by linking together their own bodies! They march relentlessly as one enormous column, and are notorious for eating anything that gets in their path. They can kill, and eat up to 100,000 animals in a day! They normally consume lizards, snakes, chickens, pigs, goats, scorpions, tarantulas, beetles and other ants. Army ants can also climb trees, and feed on animals within its canopy. A colony of a million army ants is a sophisticated 'super-organism' that rampages through the rainforest, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

Komodo Dragons

Komodo dragons are the world's heaviest living lizards. They can grow to a length of 3.4 metres, and can weigh around 68 kgs. Despite its size, the komodo is fast moving and agile. It can climb trees, and like all monitor lizards , it is a good swimmer. The Komodo is carnivorous and cannibalistic, and it has a huge appetite. It regularly kills prey as large as pigs and small deer. The komodo will, in fact, eat anything it can overpower, including small dragons, and small or injured humans.

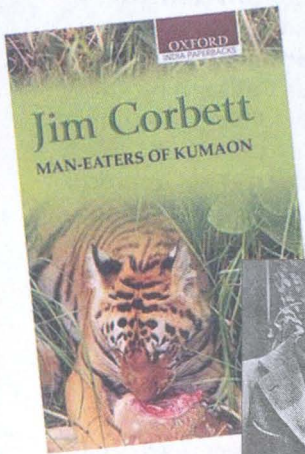
Komodo Dragon

MANORAMA

TELL ME WHY

Next issue

GLOBAL WARMING



Jim Corbett

Man-eaters of Kumaon

'The Man-eaters of Kumaon', is a book by Jim Corbett, describing his campaign against the man-eating tigers of the Kumaon Hills. The book also gives us a lot of information about the flora and fauna of the region, and about village life. The book shows that the qualities that a successful hunter needs are physical strength, infinite patience, great power of observation, and the power not only to notice small signs, but also to draw the right inference from those signs, and most importantly, great courage.

● *Ninu Dixit*

The cruellest of all!

As we have already seen, the animal world is full of hunters. But the worst of the lot is Man. He is the cruellest, too. When all the hunting animals kill for their food, Man, the hunter, takes pleasure in killing for sheer fun. He is the most crafty among hunters, imitating the skills of all other animals. He may not have the long sharp claws of a tiger, but he invented tools far better!

CLARIFICATIONS & CORRECTIONS

It is our policy to correct errors, and present differing views and clarifications about the contents in previous issues. Please send in your feedback, mentioning the title and page number.

Srinidhi S.U., a student of class X from Bengaluru points out an error in our April issue, 'States of India'. The number of districts in Karnataka is not 27, as mentioned on Page 41. Three more districts were recently formed, making the number 30.

Mr. R. C. Sharma, from Jodhpur has given an update of the number of districts in some other states too. Bihar-38, Chhattisgarh-27, Haryana- 21, Jharkhand -24, Nagaland-11, Punjab-20, Uttarakhand-17, Uttar Pradesh - 71.

Thank you Srinidhi and Mr. Sharma, for your valuable feedbacks.

-Editor

I Wonder Why?

The question of the month

Aren't there many little things you have wondered about, but didn't know whom to ask? Send us your questions, and we will give you the fascinating reasons behind the incredible mysteries of life.

Why is the symbol @ used in an e-mail address?

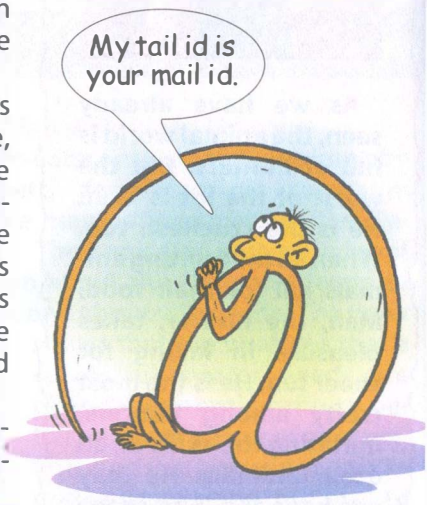
The symbol @ merely means 'at'. On an email id, its purpose is to tell where the person can be located on the Internet.

In effect, an e-mail address (or an e-mail id, as we usually call it) is like an ordinary address. What it does is to say who the person is, and where his messages are going.

The part of an e-mail address that tells you a person's name, is called the username. And the part that tells you where his e-mails should be directed (or the name of the service provider) is called the mail server. There is another part at the end, like .com, .in, .co etc, which is called the domain name.

The symbol @ is used to separate the username from the latter part. An example would be, sachin@gmail.com. Now, when you send an email to this address, the .com domain will direct it to the Gmail server. Then the server would locate the mailbox of the username, and deliver the message.

● *Arvind Bhat*



MANORAMA TELL ME WHY - HUNTERS OF THE ANIMAL WORLD

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TELL ME WHY

MANORAMA

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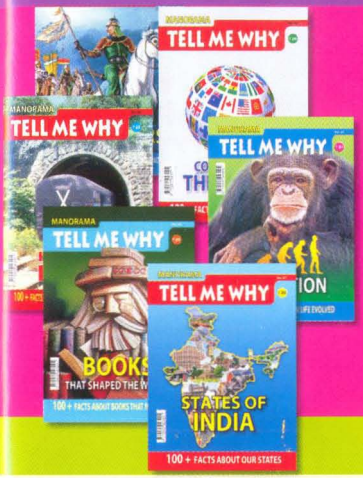
KNOWLEDGE MAGAZINE FOR KIDS IN ENGLISH

100 Pages



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